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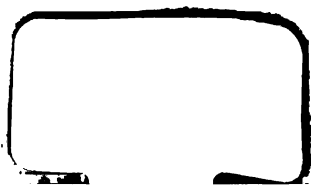


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EDMUND MORDAUNT-WINTHROP



N. P. Rodman -

1898

THE
BRITISH CICERO;
OR,
A SELECTION
OF THE
MOST ADMIRED SPEECHES
IN THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

ARRANGED UNDER THREE DISTINCT HEADS OF POPULAR,
PARLIAMENTARY, AND JUDICIAL ORATORY:

WITH HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
*AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND PRACTICE
OF ELOQUENCE.*

BY THOMAS BROWNE, LL. D.
AUTHOR OF "VIRIDARIUM POETICUM," THE "UNION DICTIONARY," &c. &c.

——— *Quid facundia posset*
Re patuit. ——— OVID. MET. Lib. XIII.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
AMERICAN Wars, Historical Illustrations of,	1
Mr. PITT (afterwards Earl of Chatham) offers his Sentiments respecting it, - - - -	2
Mr. George Grenville vindicates its Justice and Policy, - - - -	3
Mr. Pitt's animated and enthusiastic Reply, -	4 —
Lord North objects to the Repeal of the Duty on Tea, - - - -	7
Governor Pownal's Observations thereon, -	<i>ib.</i>
Lord Chatham's Observations on the third Reading of the Bill for quartering Soldiers in America, in 1774, - - - -	8
Sketch of Mr. Burke's brilliant Speech on Mr. Rose Fuller's Motion respecting the Repeal of the Tax upon Tea, April 19th, 1774, - - - -	10

	PAGE
Lord Chatham's Speech, 20th January, 1775,	33
Ditto on moving an Amendment to the Address, 20th November, 1777, - - - -	39
Lord Chatham, in Reply to Lord Suffolk, who con- tended for the Employment of Indians in the War, - - - - -	42
Mr. Fox's Speech on proposing Means of Accom- modation in the American War, June 12th, 1781,	44
Mr. Pitt vindicates the political Opinions of his Fa- ther, the late Earl of Chatham, - - -	54
Summary of the Speeches of Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Burke, on the Address in November, 1781, - - - - -	58

CHAPTER VI.

Historical Illustrations of the Peace, in 1783,	62
Lord Shelburne's Defence thereof, - -	63

CHAPTER VII.

Toleration Speech of Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, in Support of the Bill for enlarging the Toleration Act, in the Session of 1779, -	67
Mr. Beaufoy's Speech on the same Subject, March 28th, 1787, - - - - -	70
Lord North's Reply to Mr. Beaufoy, - -	85
Mr. Beaufoy's second Speech on the same Subject, May 8th, 1789, - - - - -	91
Mr. Fox's Speech on the same Subject, March 2d, 1790, - - - - -	111

CHAPTER VIII.

	PAGE
Government of India : Historical Illustration, with Mr. Fox's Reply to principal Objections against his India Bill, - - - - -	130
Lord Thurlow's Speech on same Subject, -	142
Historical Illustrations on Mr. Pitt's India Bill,	148
Mr. Pitt's Speech on the Introduction of the same,	ib.

CHAPTER IX.

Impeachment of Warren Hastings, with historical Illustrations, - - - - -	166
Mr. Sheridan's celebrated Speech respecting the Begum Princesses of Oude, February 7th, 1787,	167
Sir Gilbert Elliot's (now Lord Minto) Speech on the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, 12th of December, 1787, - . - - -	191

CHAPTER X.

Regency, with historical Illustrations, - -	199
Mr. Fox's Observations thereon, - - -	200
Mr. Pitt's Reply to Mr. Fox, - - -	203

CHAPTER XI.

Commercial Treaty with France, with historical Il- lustrations, and Mr. Pitt's Speech respecting it, Feb. 12th, 1787, - - - - -	207
Mr. Fox's Speech in Reply to Mr. Pitt, -	226

CHAPTER XII.

	PAGE
War with France:—Debate on the Army Estimates, which led to a very violent Shock or Conflict of Opinions between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox:—	
Speech of Mr. Burke, - - - -	239
Mr. Fox's Reply to Mr. Burke, - - -	251
Mr. Burke's Answer, - - - -	255
Mr. Sheridan declares his Opinion, - -	256
Mr. Burke's Answer, - - - -	259
Political Connection between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox completely dissolved—Mr. Burke's Speech,	261
Mr. Fox's Speech, - - - -	266
Mr. Burke's Reply, - - - -	273
Concern exhibited by the House on the Dispute be- tween Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox—Mr. Fox pro- ceeds to answer Mr. Burke, - - -	282
Further historical Illustrations on the Subject of the War with France, - - - -	294
Mr. Pitt's Speech on his Majesty's Message of the 28th of January, 1793 preparatory to an actual Declaration of War with France, - -	295
Mr. Fox's Reply to Mr. Pitt, - - -	316
Mr. Fox's Speech on moving for a Committee to inquire into the State of the Nation on March 24, 1795, - - - -	331
Mr. Pitt's Reply to Mr. Fox, - - -	354
Mr. Sheridan's Speech on the same Subject, -	372
Mr. Fox's energetic Reply, - - -	377

CONTENTS.

vii

PAGE

Mr. Pitt's Speech upon Lord Malmesbury's Failure	
in negotiating a Peace, - - - -	384
Historical Illustrations relative to the Failure of	
Lord Malmesbury's second Negotiation, -	412
The Marquis of Lansdown's able and animated	
Speech on this Subject in the House of Lords,	413

CHAPTER XIII.

Troubles in Ireland :—Mr. Fox's Speech thereon,	
March 23d, 1797, - - - -	425
Mr. Pitt's celebrated Speech on his Plan of Union	
with Ireland, - - - -	447

THE BRITISH CICERO.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER V.

AMERICAN WAR.

FROM the passing of the Stamp Act in 1765 to the actual commencement of hostilities in 1775, as well as during the subsequent continuance of the war, a strenuous opposition was kept up by the patriotic party in both houses of parliament to all measures of a violent or coercive tendency; and the debates were frequent and animated. They fill several volumes. We can select only a few of the most remarkable speeches.

In January 1766, his Majesty having previously changed his ministers, and appointed the Marquis of Rockingham first Lord of the treasury, parliament met for the despatch of business, and their attention was immediately engrossed by the disturbances and tumults which had taken place in almost all parts of the continent of America, in consequence of the stamp act passed in the last session. The speech from the throne was dictated by mild policy. In the debate on the motion of address, Mr. PITT (afterwards earl of CHATHAM) rose to offer his sentiments on the present alarming situation of affairs.

He pronounced every capital measure taken by the late ministers to have been entirely wrong. As to the present ministers, though he acknowledged them to be men of fair characters, and such as he was happy to see engaged in his Majesty's service, he professed that he could not give them his confidence. "Confidence," said he, "is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom: youth is the season of credulity. By comparing events with each other, reasoning from effects to causes, methinks I plainly discover the traces of an over-ruling influence. I have had the honour to serve the crown, and could I have submitted to *influence*, I might still have continued to serve; but I would not be responsible for others. I have no local attachments. It is indifferent to me whether a man was rocked in his cradle on this side or that side of the Tweed. I countenanced and protected merit wherever it was to be found. It is my boast that I was the first minister who sought for it in the mountains of the north. I called it forth, and drew into your service an hardy, an intrepid race of men, who were once dreaded as the inveterate enemies of the state. When I ceased to serve his Majesty as a minister, it was not the country of the man, by which I was moved, but the man of that country held principles incompatible with freedom. It is a long time, Mr. Speaker, since I have attended in parliament. When the resolution was taken in this House to tax America, I was ill in bed. If I could have endured to have been carried in my bed, so great was the agitation of my mind for the consequences, I would have solicited some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor, to have borne my testimony against it. It is my opinion that this kingdom has *no right* to lay a tax upon the Colonies. At the same time, I assert the authority of this kingdom to be sovereign and supreme in every circumstance of government and legislation whatsoever. Taxation is no part of the governing or legislative power: the taxes are a volun-

tary gift and grant of the commons alone. The concurrence of the Peers and of the Crown is necessary only as a form of law. This house represents the Commons of Great Britain. When in this House we give and grant; therefore we give and grant what is our own; but can we give and grant the property of the commons of America? It is an absurdity in terms. There is an idea in some, that the colonies are virtually represented in this house? I would fain know by whom? The idea of *virtual* representation is the most contemptible that ever entered into the head of man: it does not deserve a serious refutation. The commons in America, represented in their several assemblies, have invariably exercised this constitutional right of giving and granting their own money: they would have been slaves, if they had not enjoyed it. At the same time this kingdom has ever possessed the power of legislative and commercial control. The colonies acknowledge your authorities in all things, with the sole exception that you shall not take their money out of their pockets without their consent. Here would I draw the line, *quam ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.*"

Mr. GEORGE GRENVILLE, the author of the obnoxious tax, entered into a vindication of the justice and policy of the measure. He asserted, that the tumults in America bordered upon open rebellion; and if the doctrine promulgated that day were confirmed, he feared they would lose this name to take that of revolution. He affirmed taxation to be a branch of the sovereign power and that it had been frequently exercised over those who were never represented: it was exercised over the East India and other chartered companies; over the proprietors of stock; and over many great manufacturing towns. It was exercised over the Palatinate of Chester and the Bishopric of Durham, before they sent representatives to parliament. He appealed for proofs to the preambles of the act, which gave them representatives, and which, by

his desire were read to the House. He said that when he proposed to tax America, the *right* was by no one called in question. Protection and obedience were reciprocal : Great Britain protects America ; America is therefore bound to yield obedience. " If not, tell me," said he, " when were the Americans emancipated ? The seditious spirit of the colonies owes its birth to the factions in this house. We were told we trod on tender ground ; we were bid to expect disobedience ; what was this but telling America to stand out against the law ?—to encourage their obstinacy with the expectation of support from hence ? Ungrateful people of America ! The nation has run itself into an immense debt to give them protection : bounties have been extended to them : in their favor the act of navigation, that palladium of the British commerce, has been relaxed ; and now they are called upon to contribute a small share towards the public expense, they renounce your authority, insult your officers, and break out, I might almost say into open rebellion."

Mr. PITT, fired with disdain and resentment, immediately rose to reply, but was called to order by lord STRANGE, as having already spoken, the privilege of speaking a second time being allowed only in a committee. But the House resounding with the cry of " Go on," he proceeded with an animation and enthusiasm, which no art or study can imitate, spontaneously flowing from the consciousness of great talents, engaged in a just and noble cause. " Sir," said he, addressing the Speaker, " a charge is brought against gentlemen sitting in this House, for giving birth to sedition in America. The freedom, with which they have spoken their sentiments against this unhappy act, is imputed to them as a crime ; but the imputation shall not discourage me. It is a liberty which I hope no gentleman will be afraid to exercise : it is a liberty by which the gentleman who calumniates it might have profited. He ought to have desisted

from his project. We are told America is obstinate—America is almost in open rebellion. Sir, I REJOICE that America has resisted—three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest. I came not here armed at all points with law cases and acts of parliament ; with the statute book doubled down in *dog's ears* to defend the cause of liberty ; but for the defence of liberty upon a general constitutional principle ; it is a ground on which I dare meet any man : I will not debate points of law ; but what, after all, do the cases of Chester and Durham prove, but that, under the most arbitrary reigns parliament were ashamed of taxing a people without their consent, and allowed them representatives ? A higher and better example might have been taken from Wales ; that principality was never taxed by parliament till it was incorporated with England. We are told of many classes of persons in this kingdom not represented in parliament ; but are they not all virtually represented as Englishmen resident within the realm ? Have they not the option, many of them at least, of becoming themselves electors ? Every inhabitant of this kingdom is necessarily included in the general system of representation. It is a misfortune that more are not actually represented. The honorable gentleman boasts of his bounties to America. Are not these bounties intended finally for the benefit of this kingdom ? If they are not, he has misapplied the national treasures. I am no courtier of America. I maintain that parliament has a right to bind, to restrain America. Our legislative power over the colonies is sovereign and supreme. The honorable gentleman tells us, he understands not the difference between internal and external taxation ; but surely there is a plain difference between taxes levied for the purpose of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of commerce. When, said the honorable gentleman,

were the colonies emancipated? At what time, say I in answer, were they made slaves? I speak from accurate knowledge, when I say, that the profits to *Great Britain* from the trade of the Colonies, through all its branches, is two millions per annum. This is the fund which carried you triumphantly through the last war; this is the price America pays you for her protection; and shall a miserable financier come with a boast that he can fetch a pepper-corn into the exchequer, at the loss of millions to the nation? I know the valour of your troops; I know the skill of your officers; I know the force of this country; but in such a cause, your success would be hazardous, America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man: she would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution with her. Is this your boasted peace? Not to sheathe the sword in the scabbard, but to sheathe it in the bowels of your countrymen? The Americans have been wronged; they have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? No; let this country be the first to resume its prudence and temper. I will pledge myself for the colonies, that, on their part, animosity and resentment will cease. Let affection be the only bond of coercion. The system of policy I would earnestly recommend Great Britain to adopt, in relation to America, is happily expressed in the words of a favorite poet:

" Be to her faults a little blind,
 " Be to her virtues very kind;
 " Let all her ways be unconfined;
 " And clap your Padlock on her mind."

PRIOR.

" Upon the whole I beg leave to tell the House in a few words, what is really my opinion. It is that the Stamp Act be repealed—ABSOLUTELY—TOTALLY and IMMEDIATELY."

In the early part of the session of 1770 lord NORTH as one of the first acts of his Administration moved the repeal of the port duties of 1767, excepting the duty on tea, which was continued on the avowed principle of asserting the supremacy of Great Britain—When urged to repeal this also. “Has the repeal of the stamp act,” said said he, “taught the Americans obedience? Has our lenity inspired them with moderation? Can it be proper, while they deny our legal power to tax them, to acquiesce in the argument of illegality? and by the repeal of the whole law to give up that power? No, the properest time to exert our right of taxation is when the right is refused—To temporize is to yield. And the authority of the mother country, if it is now unsupported, will in reality be relinquished for ever. A total repeal cannot be thought of, till *America is prostrate at our feet.*”

Governor POWNALL, who moved to include the duty on tea, as an amendment to the original motion, acknowledged that even the total repeal of the duties in question, though it might be expected to do much, would not restore satisfaction to America. “If,” said he, “it be asked, whether it will remove apprehensions excited by your resolutions and address of last year for bringing to trial in England persons accused of treason in America, I answer no. If it be asked, if this commercial concession would quiet the minds of Americans as to the political doubts and fears which have struck them to the heart throughout the continent, I answer no. So long as they are left in doubt, whether the *Habeus Corpus* Act, whether the Bill of Rights, whether the common law, as now existing in England, have any operation and effect in America, they cannot be satisfied. At this hour they know not, whether their civil constitutions be not suspended and superseded by the establishment of a military force. The Americans think that they have, in return to all their applications, experienced a temper and disposi-

tion that is unfriendly ;—that the enjoyment and exercise of the common rights of freemen have been refused to them. Never, with these views, will they solicit the favor of this House. Never more will they wish to bring before parliament the grievances, under which they conceive themselves to labor. Deeply as they feel, they suffer with a determined and alarming silence. For their liberty they are under no apprehensions. It was first planted under the auspicious genius of the constitution. It has grown up into a verdant and flourishing tree ; and should any severe strokes be aimed at the branches, and fate reduce it to the bare stock, it would only take deeper root, and spring out again more hardy and durable than before. They trust Providence, and wait with firmness and fortitude the issue.”

On the third reading of the bill for quartering soldiers in America in 1774, lord CHATHAM spoke thus :

“ If, my lords, we take a transient view of these motives which induced the ancestors of our fellow-subjects in America to leave their native country, to encounter the innumerable difficulties of the unexplored regions of the western world, our astonishment at the present conduct of their descendants will naturally subside. There was no corner of the globe to which they would not have fled, rather than submit to the slavish and tyrannical spirit which prevailed at that period in their native country ; and viewing them in their originally forlorn and now flourishing state, they may be cited as illustrious instances to instruct the world, what great exertions mankind will naturally make, when left to the free exercise of their own powers. Notwithstanding my intention to give my hearty negative to the question now before you, I condemn, my lords, in the severest manner, the turbulent and unwarrantable conduct of the Americans in some instances, particularly in the late riots at Boston ; but, my lords, the mode which has been pursued to bring them back to a ,

sense of their duty, is so diametrically opposite to every principle of sound policy, as to excite my utmost astonishment. You have involved the guilty and the innocent in one common punishment, and avenge the crimes of a few lawless depredators upon the whole body of the inhabitants. My lords, the different provinces of America, in the excess of their gratitude for the repeal of the Stamp Act, seemed to vie with each other in expressions of loyalty and duty; but the moment they perceived your intention to tax them was renewed under a pretence of serving the East India company, their resentment got the ascendant of their moderation, and hurried them into actions which their cooler reason would abhor. But, my lords, from the whole complexion of the late proceedings, I cannot but incline to think that administration has purposely irritated them into these violent acts, in order to gratify their own malice and revenge. What else could induce them to dress taxation, the father of American sedition, in the robes of an East India director, but to break in upon that mutual peace and harmony, which then so happily subsisted between the colonies, and the mother country? My lords, it has always been my fixed and unalterable opinion, and I will carry it with me to the grave, that this country had no right under heaven to tax America. It is contrary to all the principles of justice and civil policy: it is contrary to that essential, that unalterable *right in nature*, ingrafted into the British constitution as a fundamental law, that what a man has honestly acquired is absolutely his own, which he may freely give, but which cannot be taken from him without his consent. Pass then, my lords, instead of these harsh and severe edicts, an amnesty over their errors: by measures of lenity and affection allure them to their duty: act the part of a generous and forgiving parent. A period may arrive when this parent may stand in need of every assistance she can receive from a grateful and affectionate

offspring. The welfare of this country, my lords, has ever been my greatest joy, and under all the vicissitudes of my life has afforded me the most pleasing consolation. Should the all-disposing hand of Providence prevent me from contributing my poor and feeble aid in the day of her distress, my prayers shall be ever for her prosperity. 'Length of days be in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor. May her ways be ways of pleasantness; and all her paths be peace!'

But the greatest effort of a nature directly conciliatory was made on the 19th of April 1774, by Mr. ROSE FULLER, who moved,

"That the House resolve itself into a committee to take into consideration the duty on the importation of teas into America, and the appropriation of the same, with a view to its repeal."

Mr. CORNWALL, then one of the lords of the treasury, and afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, opposed the motion as impolitic and imprudent; as tending to discover a pusillanimous timidity, without the least chance of regaining the affections of the Americans. He asserted, that the repeal of the stamp act had not produced any good effect; that disturbances had been fomenting and growing ever since; that the present concession would only induce the colonists to apply for the repeal of other duties; nor would they stop until we had surrendered the whole, and by that means America itself.

These reflections called up Mr. BURKE, who made a long and brilliant speech. We must content ourselves with a summary of its beauties, and particularly the orator's review of the colonial system, and his masterly delineations of public characters. His exordium was happily taken from a remark of Mr. CORNWALL'S. "I agree," said he, "with the honorable gentleman who spoke last, that this subject is not new in this house. Very disagreeably to this house, very unfortunately to this na-

tion, and to the peace and prosperity of this whole empire, no topic has been more familiar to us. For nine long years, session after session, we have been lashed round and round this miserable circle of occasional argument and temporary expedients, I am sure our heads must turn, and our stomachs nauseate with them. We have had them in every shape—we have looked at them in every point of view—Invention is exhausted; reason is fatigued; experience has given judgment; but obstinacy is not yet conquered.”

After this opening, Mr. BURKE very accurately distinguishes the two grounds of deliberation stated to the House by the preceding speaker; one narrow and simple, merely confined to the question; the other more large and more complicated, comprehending the whole series of the parliamentary proceedings, with regard to America, their causes, and their consequences. “He desires to know,” says Mr. BURKE, “whether if we were to repeal this tax, the Americans would not take post upon such a concession, in order to make a new attack on the next body of taxes; and whether they would not call for a repeal of the duty on wine, as loudly as they do now for the repeal of the duty on tea? I steadily appeal to experience, and would to God! there was no other arbiter to decide on the vote, with which the House is to conclude this day. When parliament repealed the stamp act in the year 1766, I affirm first, the Americans did *not*, in consequence of this measure, call upon you to give up the former parliamentary revenue which subsisted in that country, or even any one of the articles which compose it. I affirm also, that when departing from the maxims of that repeal, you revived the scheme of taxation, and thereby filled the minds of the colonists with new jealousy and all sorts of apprehensions, then it was, that they quarrelled with the old taxes, as well as the new: then it was, and not till then, that they questioned all the parts

of your legislative power ; and by the battery of such questions have shaken the solid structure of this empire to its deepest foundations."

Mr. BURKE goes back to the navigation-act, which he calls the *corner-stone* of the policy of this country with regard to its colonies. "That policy," says he, "was from the beginning purely commercial ; and the commercial system was wholly restrictive. It was the system of a monopoly. No trade was let loose from that constraint, but merely to enable the colonists to dispose of what in the course of your trade you could not take, or to enable them to dispose of such articles as we forced upon them ; and for which, without some degree of liberty, they could not pay. Hence all your specific and detailed enumerations ; hence the innumerable checks, and counter-checks ; hence that infinite variety of *paper-chains*, by which you bind together this complicated system of the colonies. This principle of commercial monopoly runs through no less than twenty-nine acts of parliament from the year 1660 to the unfortunate period of 1764. In all those acts, the system of commerce is established, as that from whence alone you proposed to make the colonies contribute to the strength of the empire. I venture to say, that, during that whole period, a parliamentary revenue from thence was never once in contemplation."

Here Mr. BURKE shews, that no act avowedly for the purpose of revenue, and with the ordinary title and recital taken together, could be found in the statute book, until the year 1764. All before this period stood on commercial regulation and restraint. Whatever the right might have been, the mode of using it then adopted was absolutely new in policy and practice.

Aware of an objection, which would naturally be started on the principle he laid down, he thus addresses the chair :

“ SIR,

“ They who are friends to the scheme of American revenue, say, that the commercial restraint is full as hard a law for America to live under. I think so too. I think it, if uncompensated, to be a condition of as rigorous servitude as men can be subject to. But America bore it from the fundamental act of navigation until 1764. Why? Because men do bear the inevitable constitution of their original nature with all its infirmities. The act of navigation attended the colonies from their infancy, grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. They were confirmed in obedience to it, even more by usage than by law. They scarcely had remembered a time when they were not subject to such restraint. Besides, they were indemnified for it by a pecuniary compensation. Their monopolist happened to be one of the richest men in the world. By his immense capital they were enabled to proceed with their fisheries, their agriculture, their ship-building, and their trade too, within the limits, in such a manner as got far the start of the slow, languid operations of unassisted nature. This capital was a hot-bed to them. Nothing in the history of mankind is like their progress. For my own part, I never cast an eye on their flourishing commerce, and their cultivated and commodious life, but they seem to me rather ancient nations, grown to perfection through a long series of fortunate events, and a train of successful industry, accumulating wealth in many centuries, than the colonies of yesterday, than a set of miserable outcasts, a few years ago, not so much sent, as thrown out on the bleak and barren shore of a desolate wilderness, three thousand miles from all civilized intercourse. All this was done by England, whilst England pursued trade, and forgot revenue. You not only acquired commerce, but you actually created the very objects of trade in America; and by that creation you raised the trade of this kingdom four-fold. America

had the compensation of your capital, which made her bear her servitude. She had another compensation, which you are now going to take from her. She had, except the commercial restraint, every characteristic mark of a free people in all her internal concerns. She had the image of the British constitution. She had the substance—she was taxed by her own representatives—She chose most of her own magistrates—She paid them all—She had in effect the sole disposal of her own internal government. This whole state of commercial servitude and civil liberty, taken together, is certainly not perfect freedom ; but comparing it with the ordinary circumstances of human nature, it was an happy and a liberal condition. Whether you were right or wrong in establishing the colonies on the principles of commercial monopoly, rather than on that of revenue, is at this day a problem of mere speculation. You cannot have both by the same authority. To join together the restraints of an universal, internal, and external monopoly is an unnatural union—perfect, uncompensated slavery. You have long since decided for yourself and them, and you and they have prospered exceedingly under that decision.”

The first fatal departure from that choice, at the close of the war, is clearly pointed out, and accurately traced by the orator. “ Then,” says he, “ a scheme of government, new in many things, seemed to have been adopted. I saw, or thought I saw, several symptoms of a great change, whilst I sat in your gallery a good while before I had the honor of a seat in this house. At that period, the necessity was established of keeping up no less than twenty-two regiments, with twenty colonels capable of seats in this house. This scheme was adopted with very general applause from all sides, at the very time that by your conquests in America, your danger from foreign attempts in that part of the world was much lessened, or indeed rather quite over. When this huge

increase of military establishment was resolved on, a revenue was to be found to support so great a burthen."

After a remark on the artifice with which CHARLES TOWNSEND, then pay-master of the forces, cajoled the country gentlemen, by playing before their eyes the image of a revenue to be raised in America, he adds, "Here began to dawn the first glimmerings of this new, colony system. It appeared more distinctly afterwards, when it was devolved upon a person [GEORGE GRENVILLE] to whom no other accounts this country owes very great obligations. I do believe that he had a very serious desire to benefit the public. But with no small study of the detail, he did not seem to have his view at least equally carried to the total circuit of our affairs. He generally considered his objects in lights that were rather too detached. No man can believe that at this time of day I mean to lean on the venerable memory of a great man, whose loss we deplore in common. Our little party differences have long ago been composed; and I have acted more with him, and certainly with more pleasure with him, than ever I acted against him. Undoubtedly, Mr. GRENVILLE was a first rate figure in this country. With a masculine understanding, and a stout and resolute heart, he had an application undissipated and unwearied. He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy; and he seemed to have no delight out of this house, except in such things as some way related to the business that was to be done within it. If he was ambitious, I will say this for him, his ambition was of a noble and generous strain. It was to raise himself, not by the low, pimping politics of a Court, but to win his way to power through the laborious gradations of public service; and to secure to himself a well earned rank in parliament by a thorough knowledge of its constitution, and a perfect practice in all its business. If such a man fell into errors, it must

be from defects not intrinsic: they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life, which, though they do not alter the ground-work of character, yet tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession. He was bred to the law, which is in my opinion one of the first and noblest of human sciences—a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding, than all the other kinds of learning put together; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study, he did not go very largely into the world; but plunged into business: I mean into the business of office, and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge is to be had undoubtedly in that line; and there is no knowledge that is not valuable. But it may be truly said, that men too much conversant in office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well, as long as things go on in their common order; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, that a far more extensive comprehension of things is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give. Mr. GRENVILLE thought better of the wisdom and power of human legislation than in truth it deserves. He conceived, and many conceived along with him, that the flourishing trade of this country was greatly owing to law and institution, and not quite so much to liberty; for but too many are apt to believe regulation to be commerce, and taxes to be revenue. Among regulations, that which stood first in reputation was his

idol, I mean the act of navigation. He has often professed it to be so. The policy of that act is, I readily admit, in many respects well understood. But I do say that if the act be suffered to run the full length of its principle, and is not changed and modified according to the change of times and fluctuation of circumstances, it must do great mischief, and frequently even defeat its own purpose. After the war," says he, "and in the last years of it, the trade of America had increased beyond the speculations of the most sanguine imaginations. It swelled out on every side. It filled all its proper channels to the brim. It overflowed with a rich redundancy, and breaking its banks on the right and on the left, it spread out upon some places where it was indeed improper, upon others where it was only irregular. It is the nature of all greatness not to be exact; and great trade will always be attended with considerable abuses. The contraband will always keep pace in some measure with the fair trade. It should stand as a fundamental maxim, that no vulgar precaution ought to be employed in the cure of the evils, which are closely connected with the cause of our prosperity. Perhaps this great person turned his eye somewhat less than was just towards the incredible increase of the fair trade, and looked with something of too exquisite a jealousy towards the contraband. He certainly felt a singular degree of anxiety on the subject and even began to act from that passion earlier than is commonly imagined. For whilst he was first lord of the admiralty, though not strictly called upon in his official line, he presented a very strong memorial to the lords of the treasury [my lord BUTE was then at the head of the board] heavily complaining of the growth of the illicit commerce in America. Some mischief happened even at this time from this over-earnest zeal. Much greater happened afterwards, when it operated with greater powers in the highest department of the finances. The

bonds of the act of navigation were straightened so much, that America was on the point of having no trade, either contraband, or legitimate. They found, under the construction and execution then used, the act no longer tying, but actually strangling them. In consequence of Mr. GRENVILLE's prohibitions, which were for some time enforced by the naval officers with the utmost severity, not only all the contraband, but the fair and lawful trade of the Americans was threatened with irretrievable ruin. Other circumstances, the appointments of courts of admiralty, the extinction of the paper currencies, and a compulsory provision for the quartering of soldiers concurred with those checks on the coasting and maritime trade to make the people of America think themselves proceeded against as delinquents, or at best as people under suspicion of delinquency."

But the grand manœuvre, as Mr. BURKE well observes, was the fifteenth act of the fourth of GEORGE the Third; which opened a new principle, and may be properly said to begin the second period of the policy of this country with regard to the colonies. The scheme of a regular plantation parliamentary revenue was then adopted in theory, and settled in practice—a revenue, not substituted in the place of, but superadded to a monopoly. "This act, Sir," continues Mr. Burke, "had for the first time the title of *granting duties in the colonies and plantations of America*; and for the first time it was asserted in the preamble, that it was just and necessary that a revenue should be raised there. Then came the technical words of *giving and granting*: and thus a complete American revenue act was made in all the forms, and with a full avowal of the right, equity, policy, and even necessity of taxing the colonies, without any formal consent of theirs. Sir, it has been said in the debate, that when the first American revenue act passed, the Americans did not object to the principle. It is true they touched it but

very tenderly. It was not a direct attack. They were, it is true, as yet novices, as yet unaccustomed to direct attacks upon any of the rights of parliament. The duties were port duties like those they had been accustomed to bear, with this difference, that the title was not the same, the preamble not the same, and the spirit altogether unlike."

Mr. BURKE then takes notice of some pretences which had been urged in justification of Mr. GRENVILLE's conduct towards the colonies. It was said, that he had given their agents an option for their assemblies to tax themselves, which they had refused. Mr. BURKE endeavours to prove that this was neither true nor possible. He observes, first, that Mr. GRENVILLE had never thought fit to make such an apology for himself, in the innumerable debates on the subject. That gentleman might have proposed to the colony agents, that they should agree in some mode of taxation, as the ground of an act of parliament. But he never could have proposed that they should tax themselves on requisition: he well knew that the colony agents could have no general powers to consent to it; and they had no time to consult their assemblies for particular powers, before he passed his first revenue act: he had also declared his opinion, an hundred times in the house, that the colonies could not legally grant any revenue to the crown, and that infinite mischiefs would be the consequence of such a power: he had even told one of the members, who had stated his dislike to the stamp act, that he was willing to exchange that duty for any other equally productive; but that any objections to the Americans being taxed by parliament were useless, as he was determined on the measure. It was therefore evident, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no idea of leaving it at the option of the colonial assemblies to tax themselves.

Mr. BURKE goes on in a tone of triumph, " Thus, Sir, he adds, " I have disposed of this falsehood. But falsehood has a perennial spring. It is said, that no conjecture could be made of the dislike of the colonies to the principle. This is as untrue as the other. After the resolution of the house, and before the passing of the stamp act, the colonies of Massachusetts Bay and New York did send remonstrances, objecting to this mode of parliamentary taxation. What was the consequence? They were suppressed; they were put under the table, notwithstanding an order of council to the contrary, by the ministry which composed the very council that had made the order; and thus the House proceeded to its business of taxing, without the least regular knowledge of the objections which were made to it. But to give that House its due, it was not over desirous to receive information, or to hear remonstrance. On the fifteenth of February 1765, whilst the stamp act was under deliberation, they refused with scorn even so much as to receive four petitions presented from so respectable colonies as Connecticut, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Carolina, besides one from the traders of Jamaica. As to the colonies, they had no alternative left to them, but to disobey, or to pay the taxes imposed by that parliament, which was not suffered, or did not suffer itself even to hear them remonstrate upon the subject."

After this survey of the character and measures of Mr. GEORGE GRENVILLE, the next portrait which attracts our notice in Mr. BURKE's historical gallery, is that of the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM, to whom he thus describes his first introduction, in a strain of the most captivating modesty. " In the year sixty-five, being in a very private station, far from any line of business, and not having the honor of a seat in this house, it was my fortune, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected

with a very noble person, and at the head of the treasury department. It was indeed in a situation of little rank, and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions ; but a situation near enough to enable me to see, as well as others, what was going on ; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward."

After these introductory remarks, the orator describes the steps taken by the marquis to redress a grievance, arising from the former minister's commercial regulations in America ; which, he says, threatened total ruin to the Spanish trade ; and then adds, "on the conclusion of this business, the news of the troubles, on account of the stamp act, arrived in England. No sooner had the sound of that mighty tempest reached us, than the whole of the then opposition, instead of feeling humbled by the unhappy issue of their measures, seemed to be infinitely elated, and cried out, that the ministry, from envy to the glory of their predecessors, were prepared to repeal the stamp act." Here Mr. BURKE charges the censurers of the repeal with shifting their ground, and challenging the authors of it to say, whether they had come to such a resolution till a considerable time after the meeting of parliament ? To this he answers, that they weighed the matter as its difficulty and importance required ; that they considered maturely amongst themselves, and consulted all who could give them advice or information ; in consequence of which it was not determined till a little before the meeting of parliament ; but it was determined ; and the main lines of their own plan marked out, before that meeting. Two questions had arisen : the first, whether the repeal should be total, or only partial, taking out every thing burthensome and productive, and reserving

only an empty acknowledgement, such as a stamp on cards and dice? The other question was, on what principle the act should be repealed? On this head also, two principles were started, one that the legislative rights of this country, with regard to America, were not entire, but had certain restrictions and limitations; the other, that taxes of this kind were contrary to the fundamental principles of commerce on which the colonies were founded, and contrary to every idea of political equity, by which equity we were bound as much as possible to extend the spirit and benefit of the British constitution to every part of the British dominions. The option both of the measure, and of the principle of repeal, continued Mr. BURKE, "was made before the Session; and I wonder how any one can read the king's speech at the opening of that session, without seeing in that speech both the repeal and the declaratory act very sufficiently crayoned out. Those who cannot see this can see nothing."

As the orator passes on, he does not forget in the rapidity of his career to take notice, that the ministry had used as much despatch as was consistent with due deliberation; and he then states the reasons which had determined their choice both of the measure and its principle. "A partial repeal," says he, "or as the *bon ton* of the court then was, a *modification* would have satisfied a timid, unsystematic, procrastinating ministry, as such a measure has since done such a ministry. A modification is the constant resource of weak, undecided minds. To repeal by a denial of our right to tax in the preamble (and this too did not want advisers) would have cut in the heroic style the Gordian knot with a sword. Either measure would have cost no more than a day's debate. But when the total repeal was adopted, and adopted on principles of policy, of equity, and of commerce, this plan made it necessary to enter into many and difficult measures. It became necessary to open a very large field of evidence

commensurate to these extensive views. I think the inquiry lasted in the committee for six weeks ; and, at its conclusion, this House, by an independent, noble, spirited, and unexpected majority—by a majority that will redeem all the acts ever done by majorities in parliament,—*in the teeth of all the old mercenary Swiss of State*—in despite of all the speculators and augurs of political events—in defiance of the whole embattled legion of veteran pensioners and practised instruments of a court, gave a total repeal to the stamp act ; and, if it had been so permitted, a lasting peace to this whole empire.”

These particulars were very judiciously stated for the purpose of shewing how inconsistent it would be to attribute such an act of spirit and fortitude to timidity. “ If,” says Mr. BURKE, “ the conduct of ministry in proposing the repeal had arisen from timidity with regard to themselves, it would have been greatly to have been condemned. Interested timidity disgraces as much in the cabinet, as personal timidity does in the field. But timidity, in regard to the well-being of our country, is heroic virtue. The noble lord who then conducted affairs, and his worthy colleagues, whilst they trembled at the prospect of such distresses as you have since brought upon yourselves, were not afraid steadily to look in the face that glaring and dazzling influence at which the eyes of eagles has blenched. He looked in the face one of the ablest, and, let me say, not the most scrupulous oppositions that perhaps ever was in this House, and withstood it, unaided by even one of the usual supports of administration.”

After some pointed strictures on the gross falsehood and absurdity of a report, that lord ROCKINGHAM had been bullied into the repeal by Mr. PITT, the orator concludes this head with a burst of eloquence, in praise of his noble patron, which has seldom been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed in sublimity, and beauty. “ I confess,” said he, “ when I look back to that time, I con-

sider him as placed in one of the most trying situations, in which, perhaps, any man ever stood. In the House of Peers there were very few of the ministry out of the noble lord's own particular connexion, except lord EGMONT, who acted, as far as I could discern, an honorable and manly part, that did not look to some other future arrangement, that warped his politics. There were, in both houses, new and menacing appearances, that might naturally drive any other than a most resolute minister from his measure or from his station. The household troops openly revolted. The allies of ministry (those I mean who supported some of their measures, but refused responsibility for any) endeavoured to undermine their credit, and to take ground that must be fatal to the success of the very cause which they would be thought to countenance. The question of the repeal was brought on by ministry in the committee of this House, in the very instant when it was known that more than one court negotiation was carrying on with the heads of the opposition. Every thing upon every side was full of traps and mines. Earth below shook ; heaven above menaced ; all the elements of ministerial safety were dissolved. It was in the midst of this chaos of plots and counter-plots ; it was in the midst of this complicated warfare against public opposition, and private treachery, that the firmness of that noble person was put to the proof. He never stirred from his ground, no not an inch. He remained fixed and determined, in principle, in measure, and in conduct—He practised no management—he secured no retreat—he sought no apology.”

A very handsome compliment is also paid to general CONWAY, then secretary of state, who moved the repeal of the stamp act, and whose subsequent desertion of his friends Mr. BURKE laments in very affecting language. “ I remember” says he, “ with a melancholy pleasure the situation of the honorable gentleman who made the motion for the repeal : in that crisis, when the whole trading

interest of this empire crammed into your lobbies, with a trembling and anxious expectation, waited, almost to a winter's return of light, their fate from your resolutions. When at length you had determined in their favour, and your doors thrown open, shewed them the figure of their deliverer in the well-earned triumph of his important victory, from the whole of that grave multitude there arose an involuntary burst of gratitude and transport. They jumped upon him like children on a long absent father. They clung about him as captives around their redeemer. All England, all America joined in his applause. Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow citizens—*Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest.* I stood near him; and his face, to use the expression of the scripture of the first martyr, *his face was as if it had been the face of an angel.* I do not know how others feel; but if I had stood in that situation, I never would have exchanged it for all that kings in their profusion could bestow. I did hope that that day's danger and honor would have been a bond to hold us all together for ever. But, alas! that, with other pleasing visions, is long since vanished."

From the marquis of ROCKINGHAM and general CONWAY, Mr. BURKE proceeds to take a view of the earl of CHATHAM's administration. "Tranquillity and concord," he tells us, "were restored by the repeal of the stamp act: but did not continue long. Another scene was opened, and other actors appeared on the stage. The state, in the condition I have described it, was delivered into the hands of lord CHATHAM—a great and celebrated name—a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other country on the globe—It may be truly called

" —————Clarum et venerabile nomen

" Gentibus, et multum nostræ quod proderat urbi.

“ The venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind, and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. I am afraid to flatter him ; I am sure I am not disposed to blame him. Let those who have betrayed him by their adulation, insult him with their malevolence. But what I do not presume to censure, I may have leave to lament. For a wise man, he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. I speak with the freedom of history, and I hope without offence—one, or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general, led him into measures which were greatly mischievous to himself, and for that reason, among others perhaps, fatal to his country—measures, the effects of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable.”

Here Mr. BURKE introduces his curious description of the checkered and speckled ministry formed by the earl of CHATHAM, and then goes on thus to trace the effects :

“ In consequence of this arrangement, having put so much the larger part of his enemies and opposers into power, the confusion was such that his own principles could not possibly have any effect or influence in the conduct of affairs. If ever he fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares, principles directly the contrary were sure to predominate.—When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer a minister. When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. The gentlemen, his political friends, who with the names of various departments of ministry, were admitted, to seem,

as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him which was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never in any instance, presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his opinions, measures, and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelect minds of his friends; and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy. As if it were to insult as well as to betray him, even long before the close of the first session of his administration, when every thing was publicly transacted, and with great parade, in his name, they made an act declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America."

At that period of the earl of CHATHAM's evening declination, Mr. BURKE discovers from his political observatory another luminary, rising in the opposite quarter of the heavens, and becoming for his hour, lord of the ascendant. "This light too," says the orator, "is passed and set forever. You understand, to be sure, that I speak of CHARLES TOWNSEND, officially the reproducer of this fatal scheme, whom I cannot even now remember without some degree of sensibility. In truth he was the delight and ornament of this House, and the charm of every private society which he honored with his presence. Perhaps there never arose in this country, nor in any country, a man of a more pointed and finished wit; and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgment. If he had not so great a stock, as some have had who flourished formerly, of knowledge long treasured up, he knew better by far than any man I ever was acquainted with, how to bring

together in a short time all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate that side of the question he supported. He stated his matter skilfully and powerfully. He particularly excelled in a most luminous explanation and display of his subject. His style of argument was neither trite nor vulgar, nor subtle, and abstruse. He hit the House just between wind and water—And not being troubled with too anxious a zeal for any matter in question, he was never more tedious, or more earnest, than the pre-conceived opinions, and present temper of his hearers required; to whom he was always in perfect unison. He conformed exactly to the temper of the House, and he seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow it."

Lest Mr. BURKE might be supposed to lose sight of the main subject in these minute delineations of character, he stops short in his career, and makes an artful apology to shew their just connection; and at the same time to rouse the attention of his hearers from any accidental languor. "I beg pardon," says he, "if when I speak of this and of other great men, I appear to digress in saying something of their characters. In this eventful history of the revolutions of America, the characters of such men are of much importance. Great men are the guide-posts and land marks in the state. The credit of such men at court, or in the nation, is the sole cause of all the public measures. It would be an invidious thing (most foreign I trust to what you think my disposition) to remark the errors into which the authority of great names has brought the nation, without doing justice at the same time to the great qualities, whence that authority arose. The subject is instructive to those who wish to form themselves on whatever of excellence has gone before them. There are many young members in the House (such of late has been the rapid succession of public men) who never saw that prodigy CHARLES TOWNSHEND, nor of

course know what a ferment he was able to excite in every thing by the violent ebullition of his mixed virtues and failings ; for failings he had undoubtedly. Many of us remember them—We are this day considering the effect of them. But he had no failings which were not owing to a noble cause ; to an ardent, generous, perhaps an immoderate passion for fame—a passion which is the instinct of all great souls. He worshipped that goddess wheresoever she appeared ; but he paid his particular devotions to her in her favorite habitation, in her chosen temple, the House of Commons. Besides the characters of the individuals that compose our body, it is impossible not to observe, that this House has a collective character of its own. That character too, however imperfect, is not unamiable. Like all great public collections of men, you possess a marked love of virtue, and an abhorrence of vice. But, among vices, there is none which the House abhors in the same degree with *obstinacy*. *Obstinacy*, Sir, is certainly a great vice ; and, in the changeful state of political affairs, it is frequently the cause of great mischief. It happens however very unfortunately, that almost the whole line of the great and masculine virtues, constancy, gravity, magnanimity, fortitude, fidelity, and firmness are closely allied to this disagreeable quality of which you have so just an abhorrence ; and in their excess all these virtues very easily fall into it. He who paid such a punctilious attention to all your feelings certainly took care not to shock them by that vice which is the most disgustful to you. That fear of displeasing those who ought most to be pleased betrayed him sometimes into the other extreme. He had voted, and in the year 1765 had been an advocate for the stamp act. Things and the disposition of men's minds were changed. In short, the stamp act began to be no favorite in this House. He therefore attended at the private meeting, in which the resolutions moved by a right honorable gen-

tleman, [general CONWAY] were settled—resolutions leading to the repeal. The next day he voted for that repeal; and he would have spoken for it too, if an illness, not as was then given out, a political, but to my knowledge a very real illness, had not prevented it.

“The very next session,” continues Mr. BURKE, “as the fashion of this world passeth away, the repeal began to be in as bad an odor in this House as the stamp act had been in the session before. To conform to the temper which began to prevail, and to prevail mostly amongst those most in power, he declared very early in the winter, that a revenue must be had out of America. Instantly he was tied down to his engagements by some who had no objection to such experiments, when made at the cost of persons for whom they had no particular regard. The whole body of courtiers drove him onward. They always talked as if the king stood in a humiliated state, until something of the kind should be done. Here this extraordinary man, then chancellor of the Exchequer, found himself in great straits. To please universally was the object of his life; but to tax and to please, no more than to love and to be wise, is not given to men. However, he attempted it. To render the tax palatable to the partisans of American revenues, he made a preamble stating the necessity of such revenue. To close with the American distinction, this revenue was *external*, or port duty, but again to soften it to the other party it was a duty of *supply*. To gratify the *colonists*, it was laid on British manufactures; to satisfy the *merchants of Britain*, the duty was trivial, and (except that on tea, which touched only the devoted East India Company) on none of the grand objects of commerce. To counterwork the American contraband, the duty on tea was reduced from a shilling to three pence. But to secure the favor of those who would tax America, the scene of collection was changed, and with the rest, it was levied in the colonies.

What need I say more? This fine spun scheme had the usual fate of all exquisite policy. But the original plan of the duties, and the mode of executing that plan, both arose singly and solely from a love of our applause. He was truly the child of the House. He never thought, did, or said any thing, but with a view to you. He every day adapted himself to your disposition; and adjusted himself before it as at a looking glass. He had observed (indeed it could not escape him) that several persons infinitely his inferiors in all respects had formerly rendered themselves considerable in this House by one method alone. They were a race of men (I hope in God the species is extinct) who when they rose in their place, no man living could divine, from any known adherence to parties, to opinions, or to principles, from any order or system in their politics, or from any sequel or connection in their ideas, what part they were going to take in any debate. It is astonishing how much this uncertainty, especially at critical times, called the attention of all parties on such men. All eyes were fixed on them; all ears open to hear them; each party gaped and looked alternately for their vote almost to the end of their speeches. While the House hung in this uncertainty, now the *hear-hims*, rose from this side—now they rebellowed from the other; and that party, to whom at length they fell from their tremulous and dancing balance, always received them in a tempest of applause. The fortune of such men was a temptation too great to be resisted by one, to whom a single whiff of incense, withheld, gave much greater pain, than he received delight in the clouds of it, which daily rose about him from the prodigal superstition of his innumerable admirers. He was a candidate for contradictory honors; and his great aim to make those agree in admiration of him, who never agreed in any thing else. Hence arose this unfortunate act, the subject of this day's debate, from a disposition, which, after making an Ame-

rican revenue to please one, repealed it to please others, and again revived it in hopes of pleasing a third, and of catching something in the ideas of all."

Having taken so comprehensive a view of the changes of system adopted by different ministers from the stamp act in 1764 to the revenue act of 1767, which Mr. BURKE calls the fourth period of American policy, he declines going into the like details on the subject of lord NORTH's measures; but describes them in general terms as extremely weak, absurd, and inconsistent. "How have we fared since then," he says: "What woeful variety of schemes have been adopted? what enforcing, and what repealing? what bullying, and what submitting? what doing and undoing? what straining and what relaxing? what assemblies dissolved for not obeying, and called again without obedience? what troops sent out to quell resistance, and on meeting that resistance recalled? what shiftiness, and changes, and jumbings of all kinds of men at home, which left no possibility of order, consistency, vigor, or even so much as a decent unity of color in any one public measure? It is a tedious, irksome task. My duty may call me to open it out some other time—for the present I shall forbear." But he takes care to remind the House of the result of all these agitations, and then gives his opinions on the questions before them. "You have," says he, "an act of parliament stating, *that it is expedient to raise a revenue in America*. By a partial repeal you annihilated the greatest part of that revenue, which this preamble declares to be so expedient. You have substituted no other in the place of it. A secretary of state has disclaimed, in the king's name, all thoughts of such a substitution in future. The principle of this disclaimer goes to what has been left, as well as what has been repealed. The tax which lingers after its companions (under a preamble declaring an American revenue expedient, and for the sole purpose of supporting the theory

of that preamble) militates with the assurance authentically conveyed to the colonies ; and is an exhaustless source of jealousy, and animosity. On this state, which I take to be a fair one, not being able to discover any grounds of honor, advantage, peace, or power, for adhering either to the act, or to the preamble, I shall vote for the question which leads to the repeal of both."

The House was much amused with these ingenious representations ; but Mr. FULLER's motion was negatived by a majority of 184 to 51.

On the 20th of January 1775, the plan of absolute coercion being resolved upon by the ministry, lord Dartmouth, the secretary of state for America, laid before the Peers the official papers belonging to his department, when lord CHATHAM, though sinking under bodily infirmities, made the following powerful effort before the die was finally cast, to avert the calamity, the danger, and the ruin, which he saw impending.

" Too well apprized of the contents of the papers, now at last laid before the House, I shall not take up their lordships' time in tedious and fruitless investigations, but shall seize the first moment to open the door of reconciliation ; for every moment of delay is a moment of danger. As I have not the honor of access to his Majesty, I will endeavor to transmit to him, through the constitutional channel of this House, my ideas of America, to RESCUE him from the mis-advice of his present ministers. America, my lords, cannot be reconciled, she ought not to be reconciled to this country, till the troops of Britain are withdrawn from the continent ; they are a bar to all confidence ; they are a source of perpetual irritation ; they threaten a fatal catastrophe. How can America trust you with the bayonet at her breast ? How can she suppose that you mean less than bondage or death ? I therefore, my lords, move, that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, most humbly to advise and beseech his Majes-

ty, that, in order to open the way towards an happy settlement of the dangerous troubles in America, it may graciously please his Majesty to transmit orders to general GAGE for removing his Majesty's forces from the town of Boston. I know not, my lords, who advised the present measures : I know not who advises to a perseverance and enforcement of them ; but this I will say, that the authors of such advice ought to answer it at their utmost peril. I wish, my lords, not to lose a day in this urgent, pressing crisis : an hour now lost in allaying ferments in America may produce years of calamity. Never will I desert, in any stage of its progress, the conduct of this momentous business. Unless fettered to my bed by the extremity of sickness, I will give it unremitting attention. I will knock at the gates of this sleeping and confounded ministry, and will, if it be possible, rouse them to a sense of their danger. The recall of your army I urge as necessarily preparatory to the restoration of your peace. By this it will appear that you are disposed to treat amicably and equitably, and to consider, revise, and repeal, if it should be found necessary, as I affirm it will, those violent acts and declarations which have disseminated confusion throughout the empire. Resistance to these acts was necessary, and therefore just : and your vain declarations of the omnipotence of parliament, and your imperious doctrines of the necessity of submission, will be found equally impotent to convince or enslave America, who feels that tyranny is equally intolerable, whether it be exercised by an individual part of the Legislature, or by the collective bodies which compose it. The means of enforcing this thralldom are found to be as ridiculous and weak in practice as they are unjust in principle. Conceiving of general Gage as a man of humanity and understanding ; entertaining, as I ever must, the highest respect and affection for the British troops, I feel the most anxious sensibility for their situation, pining in inglorious

inactivity. You may call them an army of safety and defence, but they are in truth an army of impotence and contempt ; and to make the folly equal to the disgrace, they are an army of irritation and vexation. Alay then the ferment prevailing in America by removing the obnoxious hostile cause. If you delay concession till your vain hope shall be accomplished of triumphantly dictating reconciliation, you delay for ever : the force of this country would be disproportionably exerted against a brave, generous, and united people, with arms in their hands, and courage in their hearts—three millions of people, the genuine descendants of a valiant and pious ancestry, driven to those deserts by the narrow maxims of a superstitious tyranny. But is the spirit of persecution never to be appeased ? Are the brave sons of those brave forefathers to inherit their sufferings, as they have inherited their virtues ? Are they to sustain the infliction of the most oppressive and unexampled severity, beyond what history has related, or poetry has feigned ?

—————Rhodamanthus habet durissima regna,
Castigatque, *auditque* dolos.

But the Americans must not be heard ; they have been condemned unheard. The indiscriminate hand of vengeance has devoted thirty thousand British subjects of all ranks, ages, and descriptions to one common ruin. You may, no doubt, destroy their cities ; you may cut them off from the superfluities, perhaps the conveniences of life ; but, my lords, they will still despise your power, for they have yet remaining their woods and their liberty. What, though you march from town to town, from province to province ; though you should be able to enforce a temporary and local submission, how shall you be able to secure the obedience of the country you leave behind you, in your progress of eighteen hundred miles of

continent, animated with the same spirit of liberty and of resistance? This universal opposition to your arbitrary system of taxation might have been foreseen; it was obvious from the nature of things, and from the nature of man, and, above all, from the confirmed habits of thinking, from the spirit of whiggism, flourishing in America. The spirit which now pervades America, is the same which formerly opposed loans, benevolences, and ship money in this country—the same spirit which roused all England to action at the revolution, and which established at a remote æra your liberties on the basis of that great fundamental maxim of the constitution, that no subject of England shall be taxed but by his own consent. What shall oppose this spirit, aided by the congenial flame glowing in the breast of every generous Briton? To maintain this principle is the common cause of the whigs on the other side of the Atlantic, and on this; it is liberty to liberty engaged. In this great cause they are immoveably allied: it is the alliance of God and nature, immutable, eternal, fixed as the firmament of heaven. As an Englishman, I recognize to the Americans their supreme unalterable right of property. As an American, I would equally recognize to England her supreme right of regulating commerce and navigation. This distinction is involved in the abstract nature of things: property is private, individual, absolute: the touch of another annihilates it. Trade is an extended and complicated consideration: it reaches as far as ships can sail, or winds can blow: it is a vast and various machine. To regulate the numberless movements of its several parts, and to combine them in one harmonious effect, for the good of the whole, requires the superintending wisdom and energy of the supreme power of the empire. On this grand practical distinction, then, let us rest: taxation is theirs: commercial regulation is ours. As to the metaphysical refinements, attempting to shew that the Americans are equally

free from legislative control and commercial restraint, as from taxation for the purpose of revenue, I pronounce them futile, frivolous groundless. When your lordships have perused the papers transmitted us from America, when you consider the dignity, the firmness, and the wisdom with which the Americans have acted, you cannot but respect their cause. History, my lords, has been my favorite study ; and in the celebrated writings of antiquity have I often admired the patriotism of Greece and Rome ; but, my lords, I must declare and avow, that in the master-states of the world, I know not the people, nor the senate, who in such a complication of difficult circumstances, can stand in preference to the Delegates of America, assembled in General Congress at Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your lordships that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be futile. Can such a national principled union be resisted by the tricks of office or ministerial manœuvres ? Heaping papers on your table, or counting your majorities on a division, will not avert or postpone the hour of danger. It must arrive, my lords, unless these fatal acts are done away : it must arrive in all its horrors ; and then these boastful ministers, in spite of all their confidence and all their manœuvres, shall be compelled to hide their heads. But it is not repealing this or that act of parliament ; it is not repealing a piece of parchment, that can restore America to your bosom : you must repeal her fears and resentments, and then you may hope for her love and gratitude. But now, insulted with an armed force, irritated with an hostile array before her eyes, her concessions, if you *could* force them, would be suspicious, and insecure. But it is more than evident that you *cannot* force them to your unworthy terms of submission : it is impossible : we ourselves shall be forced ultimately to retract : let us retract while we can, not when we must. I

repeat it, my lords, we shall one day be *forced* to undo these violent acts of oppression : they must be repealed ; you will repeal them. I pledge myself for it, that you will in the end repeal them : I stake my reputation on it : I will consent to be taken for an IDEOT if they are not repealed. Avoid then this humiliating, disgraceful necessity. With a dignity becoming your exalted situation, make the first advances to concord, to peace and to happiness. Concession comes with better grace and more salutary effect from superior power : it reconciles superiority of power with the feeling of man, and establishes solid confidence on the foundations of affection and gratitude. On the other hand, every danger and every hazard impend to deter you from perseverance in the present ruinous measures : foreign war hanging over your heads by a slight and brittle thread—France, and Spain watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors, with a vigilant eye to America and the temper of your colonies MORE THAN TO THEIR OWN CONCERNS, BE THEY WHAT THEY MAY. To conclude, my lords, if the ministers thus persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say, that they *can* alienate the affections of his subjects from the crown ; but I affirm, they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the KING is BETRAYED, but I will pronounce, that the KINGDOM is UNDONE.”

This motion for the immediate removal of the troops from Boston was ably seconded by lord CAMDEN, whose speech was distinguished by the following bold assertions :

“ King, Lords, and Commons, are grand and sounding names, but King, Lords, and Commons may become tyrants as well as others. Tyranny in one or more is the same : it is as lawful to resist the tyranny of many, as of one : this has been a doctrine known and acted upon in this country for ages. When the famous SELDEN was asked, by what statute resistance to tyranny could be

justified? his reply was; *It is to be justified by the custom of England, which is a part of the law of the land.* I will affirm, my lords, not only as a statesman, politician, and philosopher, but as a common lawyer, that you have no right to tax America. No man, agreeably to the principles of natural or civil liberty, can be divested of any part of his property without his consent; and whenever oppression begins, resistance becomes lawful and right."

The motion was rejected by 68 voices against 18.

On the 20th of November 1777, just at the time that government had received some despatches of an unfavourable nature from general BURGOYNE, but not extending to the catastrophe of Saratoga, parliament assembled; and the speech from the throne expressed not only a confidence that the spirit and intrepidity of his Majesty's forces would be attended with important success; but "a determination steadily to pursue the measures in which we were engaged," with a hope "that the deluded, and unwary multitude would finally return to their allegiance."

In moving an amendment to the address, lord CHATHAM spoke as follows:

"It has been usual on similar occasions of public difficulty and distress, for the crown to make application to this House, the great hereditary council of the nation, for advice and assistance. As it is the right of parliament to give, so it is the duty of the crown to ask it. But, on this day, and in this extreme momentous exigency, no reliance is reposed on your counsels—no advice is asked of parliament; but the crown from itself, and by itself, declares an unalterable determination to pursue its own preconcerted measures; and what measures, my lords? measures which have produced hitherto nothing but disappointments and defeats. I CANNOT, my lords, I WILL NOT join in congratulation on misfortune and disgrace. This, my lords, is a perilous and tre-

mendous moment: it is not a time for adulation: the smoothness of flattery cannot save us in this rugged and awful crisis. It is now necessary to instruct the throne, in the language of TRUTH. We must, if possible, dispel the delusion and darkness which envelope it; and display, in its full danger and genuine colors the ruin which is brought to our doors. Can ministers still presume to expect support in their infatuation! Can parliament be so dead to its dignity and duty as to give their support to measures thus obtruded and forced upon them? Measures, my lords, which have reduced this late flourishing empire to scorn and contempt. But yesterday, "and England might have stood against the world—now, none so poor to do her reverence." The people whom we at first despised as *rebels*, but whom we now acknowledge as *enemies*, are abetted against you, supplied with every military store, their interests consulted, and their ambassadors entertained by your inveterate enemy; and our ministers do not, and dare not, interpose with dignity or effect. The desperate state of our army abroad is in part known. No man more highly esteems and honors the English troops than I do: I know their virtues and their valor: I know they can achieve any thing except impossibilities; and I know that the conquest of English America is an impossibility. You CANNOT, my lords, you CANNOT conquer America. What is your present situation there? *We do not know the worst*, but we know that in three campaigns we have done nothing, and suffered much. You may swell every expense, and strain every effort, accumulate every assistance, and extend your traffic to the *shambles* of every *German* despot; your attempts for ever will be vain and impotent; doubly so indeed from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of your adversaries to overrun them with the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder, devoting them and their possessions to

the rapacity of hireling cruelty. If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! But, my lords, who is the man, that in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of war, has dared to authorise, and associate to our arms the *toma-hawk* and *scalping knife* of the savage—to call into civilized alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitant of the woods?—to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren? My lords, these enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment. Familiarized to the horrid scenes of savage cruelty, our army can no longer boast of the noble and generous principles which dignify a soldier. No longer are their feelings awake to “the pride, pomp, and circumstance of GLORIOUS war;”—but the sense of honour is degraded into a vile spirit of plunder, and the systematic practice of murder. From the ancient connection between Great Britain and her colonies, both parties derived the most important advantage. While the shield of our protection was extended over America, she was the fountain of our wealth, the nerve of our strength, the basis of our power. It is not, my lords, a wild and lawless banditti whom we oppose; the resistance of America is the struggle of free and virtuous patriots. Let us then seize with eagerness the present moment of reconciliation. America has not yet finally given herself up to France; there yet remains a possibility of escape from the fatal effect of our delusions. In this complicated crisis of danger, weakness, and calamity, terrified and insulted by the neighbouring powers, unable to act in America, or acting only to be destroyed, WHERE is the man who will venture to flatter us with the hope of success from perseverance in measures productive of these dire effects? WHO has the effrontery to attempt it? Where is that man? Let him if he DARE, stand forward and

shew his face. You cannot conciliate America by your present measures: you cannot subdue her by your present or any measures. What then can you do? You cannot conquer, you cannot gain; but you can ADDRESS: you can lull the fears and anxieties of the moment into ignorance of the danger that should produce them. I did hope, instead of that false and empty pride, engendering high conceits and presumptuous imaginations, that ministers would have humbled themselves in their errors—would have confessed and retracted them, and by an active, though a late repentance, have endeavoured to redeem them. But, my lords, since they have neither sagacity to foresee, nor justice nor humanity to shun those calamities—since not even bitter experience can make them feel, nor the imminent ruin of their country awaken them from their stupefaction, the guardian care of parliament must interpose. I shall therefore, my lords, propose to you an amendment to the address to his Majesty—To recommend an immediate cessation of hostilities, and the commencement of a treaty to restore peace and liberty to America, strength and happiness to England, security and permanent prosperity to both countries. This, my lords, is yet in our power; and let not the wisdom and justice of your lordships neglect the happy and perhaps the only opportunity.”

LORD SUFFOLK, Secretary of State, in the course of the debate, contended for the employment of Indians in the war: “Besides its policy, and necessity,” his lordship said, “that the measure was also allowable on *principle*, for that it was perfectly justifiable to use all the means which God and Nature had put into our hands.” This moving the indignation of lord CHATHAM, he suddenly rose, and gave full vent to his feelings in one of the most extraordinary bursts of eloquence that the pen of history has recorded. “I am astonished,” exclaimed his lordship, “SHOCKED to hear such principles confes-

sed : to hear them avowed in this House, or even in this country. My lords, I did not intend to have encroached again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation. I feel myself IMPELLED to speak. My lords, we are called upon as members of this House, as men, as Christians, to protest against such horrible barbarity—That God and Nature put into our hands! What ideas of God and Nature that noble lord may entertain, I know not; but I know that such detestable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity! What, to attribute the sacred sanction of God and Nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping knife!—to the cannibals savage torturing, murdering, devouring, drinking the blood of his mangled victims! Such notions shock every precept of morality, every feeling of humanity, every sentiment of honor. These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand the most decisive indignation. I call upon that reverend, and this most learned bench to vindicate the religion of their God, to support the justice of their country. I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn: upon the judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honour of your lordships to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country, to vindicate the national character. I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble lord frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country.* In vain did he defend the liberty, and establish the religion of Britain, against the tyranny of Rome, if these worse than popish cruelties and inquisitorial prac-

* The tapestry of the house of Lords represents the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by Admiral Howard, an ancestor of Lord Suffolk—the Admiral is a conspicuous figure in the tapestry.

tices are endured among us. To send forth the merciless cannibal, thirsting for blood! against whom! Your protestant brethren!—to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name, by the aid and instrumentality of these horrible *hell-hounds of war*! Spain can no longer boast pre-eminence in barbarity. She armed herself with blood hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of Mexico; but we, more ruthless, loose the *dogs of war* against our countrymen in America, endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity. My lords, I solemnly call upon your lordships, and upon every order of men in the state, to stamp upon this infamous procedure the indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. More particularly I call upon the holy prelates of our religion to do away this iniquity: let them perform a lustration to purify their country from this deep and deadly sin. My lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more, but my feelings and indignation were too strong to say less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, nor reposed my head upon my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such enormous and preposterous principles.”

The motion, however, was negatived by a majority of 97 against 28.

On the 12th of June 1781, just after the publication of the gazette account of the victory of Guildford, and before the disastrous consequences which so soon followed, Mr. Fox moved the House to resolve itself into a committee to consider of the American war, for the purpose of devising some means of accommodation. He began by observing that this subject had undergone a recent discussion upon a motion made by his honourable friend, colonel HARTLEY, in consideration of which he should not now have troubled the House with a proposition built on the same basis, but that, since the late occasion, an argument had presented itself more unanswerable in its

nature, and more efficacious, as he had reason to hope, with gentlemen on the other side, than any thing that he or his friend could advance: their assertions might be questioned; but those of Lord CORNWALLIS, he trusted, would have all the weight, which the abilities, experience, and high professional reputation of that general might fairly challenge. He had a paper in his hand, the late gazette, from which, on the authority of lord CORNWALLIS, the impracticability of conquering America was plainly deducible; and on that alone he meant to rest his argument to day, as the best means of avoiding those stale repetitions so often complained of, when the present subject came before parliament: the subject might be old, but the field of reasoning would now have an air of novelty. He should therefore confine himself entirely to the gazette: it was an authority, to which gentlemen on the other side of the House would not object, and he begged the patience of the House would bear him company in giving it an attentive examination. This paper certainly confirmed every thing that had been advanced by his honorable friend and himself on the former occasion; but if it could be permitted him to be jocular on such a subject, he might beg the House to believe there was no collusion in the case, the gazette neither having been framed by his authority, nor he having had any previous knowledge of its contents. He remembered well the principal argument urged from the opposite benches, and on which the debate chiefly hinged, was a signal victory, which, said those gentlemen who opposed the motion of his honorable friend, will call the rebels to the British standard. The victory has since come confirmed; the British standard has been erected; but what then were the predicted fruits of what he was tempted to call this pretended victory? Nothing but disappointment; nothing but misfortune; he would not say public disgrace. The truth was, the victory of Guildford, as it was called, drew after it all

the consequences of something very nearly allied to a decisive defeat. Lord CORNWALLIS did not fly from the enemy ; but indisputable facts bore him out in affirming, that if lord CORNWALLIS had been vanquished, instead of being the temporary victor, his operations or rather movements could not have bore a more unfortunate aspect. He no longer pursued the object of his expedition : he no longer sought the enemy even in their flight. Nay more, he in an instant relinquished all the advantages he had gained with so much difficulty, which had been attended with circumstances which reflected so much honor upon himself as a commander, and upon the very gallant but ill-fated body of men whom he led to glory, and to every thing but substantial success. From the report of earl CORNWALLIS, there was the most conclusive evidence, that the war, in which we were engaged, was at once impracticable in its object, and ruinous in its progress. It furnished us with the materials and grounds both of triumph and dejection, both of glory and despair. It shewed us that, beneath the conduct of that brave man, a body of British troops had acted up to all the expectations that could be formed of their enterprise and valor ; and at the same time taught us, that neither spirit nor perseverance, neither good conduct in the commander nor courage in the soldiery, could prevail in a contest founded in evident madness and inconsistency.

He wished, he said, to examine the information which we had received from earl CORNWALLIS pretty closely. The noble lord said, " That the object of the campaign was to penetrate into North Carolina." This, the honorable gentleman said, surely could not have been sufficient of itself to sanctify an expedition of so much certain expense and probable danger ; and his lordship very properly gave the farther explanation in a subsequent passage by saying, " that it was to give protection to the many loyalists that there were in North Carolina, and to bring

them to the British standard." From whom his lordship received this information, he could not pretend to guess ; but most likely he received it from this country, where all such information had its rise and its currency. Undoubtedly there was some reason to apprehend, that there might be some men in North Carolina, who on the approach of his Majesty's arms might have joined them ; for previous to the present contest, there were a set of men in this province, a sort of banditti, who infested the peaceable inhabitants, and against whose depredations it had been found necessary to guard, by putting arms into the hands of a number of orderly persons who were called regulators. To be sure, it was not altogether unreasonable to hope, but that these banditti, who had maintained a sort of intestine war against the old established government of the province, might be expected to join those who came like themselves to attack that government. To men of such a description all governments would be alike ; and they would be ready to join any force whatever that came with hostile intentions against the settled power of the country. But even those expectations, if any such were formed, had been disappointed, and the whole object of the campaign had failed. This failure, he said, must have proceeded from either of these three causes ; first, that there must have been some essential defects in the plan ; secondly, that the means must not have been adequate to the object ; and thirdly, that there must have arisen certain unforeseen contingencies, applicable to this campaign only, which had defeated the end. As he could not for a moment suspect that either of the two former could be held up to government as the cause of our failure in regard to themselves, or the commander, whose skill, enterprise, and perseverance were justly praised, he could only have recourse to the last, as the only probable cause that could be urged by ministers, of the calamities of the campaign. With this view, therefore, he would ex-

amine the contents of earl CORNWALLIS's despatches, to see if his information would bear ministers out in this argument. He here turned to the gazette extraordinary, and by commenting on every passage, he shewed the House that the obstacles were not temporary, nor peculiar; they were not applicable only to this campaign, nor such as were either unforeseen or unexpected. They were obstacles incident to the nature of the war, and which we should always have to encounter and surmount, while the constitution of nature remained the same. They were the obstacles of rivers, of a deep intersected country, of impassable marshes, of a disaffected people, of "timid friends, and of inveterate enemies." Such was the state of the country, that he could not procure provisions for his small army, while that of general GREEN, so much more numerous, found no such want. Such was the state of that service, that he had not been able even to procure intelligence. So timid, as he expressed it, were the friends of government in that country (represented as so favorable that they would be ready to flock to the royal standard on its approach) that they would not even venture to give him intelligence, much less assistance; or only give him delusive and false intelligence, by which he might be led into situations dangerous and difficult for his army. He made here a just distinction between the conduct of the friends of government in that country, and this. There they were so timid or rather treacherous, for that was the more applicable epithet, as to give no intelligence: here they were so audacious as to give us intelligence in immense quantities. They tell us every thing. Such was the abundance of intelligence with which they furnished us, that they had hurried us on from year to year, from effort to effort, from expense to expense, with an avidity which only could be equalled by the timidity and silence of those friends whom they had left behind. He wished to God, that those men, who had been so

loquacious in England, had been in Carolina, where their audacity would have been of service ; and that those timid friends had been in England in their stead ; by which we might have been preserved from all that torrent of intelligence, which had influenced and hurried us into this war, and been provided with a little of it in the day of necessity, when information was necessary to safety, if not to success.

He proceeded next to the battle of Guildford, where the gazette asserted, we had obtained a signal victory. This term, he doubted not, was used by lord CORNWALLIS in a very proper sense ; for he could only attend to the disproportion between the two armies ; in which point of view, no doubt, that a victory should be gained on our side was very astonishing, and highly honorable to the troops ; but if the consequences of the action were to be regarded, then he must understand the word signal in a very different sense ; and allow the victory to have been *signalised*, by drawing after it the same identical effects that might have been expected from a defeat. Had our army been vanquished, what course could they have taken ? Certainly they would have abandoned the field of action, and flown for refuge to the sea-side : now these are precisely the measures we were obliged to adopt after the action at Guildford, the victorious army leaving the field, abandoning the future object of its expedition, and retiring to the fleet. Another term used by lord CORNWALLIS he must also take notice of : he called his army a *little one* ; and well indeed might he give it that appellation, since his whole force did not amount at the utmost to three thousand men. He took that number merely to avoid a contradiction that might divert the current of debate into an improper channel ; for he was credibly informed the army did not amount to one half the number he had stated ; but taking it at three thousand, then on what principle could ministers even justify confining the

operations of this active and spirited general by so scanty a force? Little indeed the army was, compared to the enemy it combated, but still less if compared to the army estimates voted this session; for it appeared by them, that no less than eighty-three thousand men were employed in America, including a small number in the West Indies; so that, in order to bring three thousand men into the field, the public were to pay for and provide eighty-three thousand. He did not mean absolutely to say, that so many were actually in the service, perhaps not a tenth part of them could be produced; but the account of them was to be seen on the table; and what language could properly describe the fraudulent conduct of ministers in imposing so grievous a burden on the people without necessity? He would take, however, if they pleased, the other alternative; he would suppose every man charged in the estimates to be really employed, and that it was necessary to keep eighty thousand on the defensive, that three thousand might be brought into the field: need there any thing else be urged to prove the ruinous tendency of the American war? For lord CORNWALLIS had stated as his opinion, that defensive measures would be certain ruin to our affairs; and yet we could not act offensively without keeping about a proportion of twenty-five to one in garrison; nor did this computation go far enough; as, besides the eighty-three thousand, our friends in America were to be reckoned nine-tenths of the whole; instead of which, however, he was rather inclined to think a great part of the former number were necessarily employed to watch them, instead of their being anywise serviceable to our cause. From this he deduced the absurdity of attempting to contend with France in America: we had conquered that power in Germany last war, as it had been said: for his part he rather entertained a different opinion, believing that both powers found that conflict so expensive, that they retired from it mutually exhausted, and saw it answered

to them the end of a war nearer home, by sufficiently weakening each other; but would that equality of expense exist in the present case? Certainly not; for the ministry could not deny, that if we had a hundred thousand men in America, and France only twenty-five thousand, she could bring more troops into the field than we; but besides this, allowing we each brought the same number, our enemy would not incur one fifth part of our expenses.

After dwelling a considerable time on the illustration of this doctrine, Mr. Fox wound up his comments on the gazette, by observing, that though lord CORNWALLIS had done every thing he proposed by penetrating into North Carolina, though he had been fortunate enough to come up with general GREEN, engaged, and defeated him, he had found no one good consequence of his success, not being joined by any body of Americans as he expected, nor even retaining the ground on which he had conquered. As therefore no unforeseen obstacles had presented themselves, and no ill conduct had attended the execution of the plan, it was undeniable, that the project was a vain one, similar to all the other enterprises we had formed during the course of the war; for inimical as the inhabitants of the country were always found, and defended as they were by natural barriers, extensive conquests must ever be impracticable, and no abilities of the general or valor of the troops could avail to any substantial success. This was experienced by general BURGOYNE at Bennington; by general HOWE at Long Island; by lord CORNWALLIS at Guildford; and so it ever must be found while the constitution of things in America remained the same. Ministers had already tried the fortune of war in nearly all the thirteen provinces: they began with Massachusetts's Bay, which was in the first commencement of the war supposed the only hostile part of the continent. An insurrection in the province of Massachusetts's Bay was the gene-

ral phrase, and formed the preamble in every act of parliament for coercing America ; of course, therefore, to suppress that insurrection was the only object of the war, and Boston was then taken possession of as the only military operation necessary ; but in a short time that town was abandoned again, and with so much avidity, that a great minister of state, now no more [lord SUFFOLK] had even congratulated parliament on the occasion. We then possessed ourselves of New York finding the flame of rebellion had extended farther southwards, and there continued till this hour, though it seemed it was not a situation for offensive measures. The next enterprise was levelled at the middle colonies, and Philadelphia taken ; which success was preceded by a very important victory ; yet that place was abandoned also much to our satisfaction, and the retreat from it had eternised the name of CLINTON. After this, we discovered all at once, that the Southern Colonies were most vulnerable and proper for an attack. A noble lord [lord WESTCOTE] proclaimed their inhabitants to be effeminate and enervated by the heat of the sun : his lordship being a scholar reasoned on the topic very scientifically, and his ideas were at once adopted : Charlestown in consequence was taken ; and but for extraordinary exertions of bravery, would have turned out a conquest more injurious to our cause than any of the preceding. In short, we had now attempted every province but Virginia and New Hampshire, the latter of which he was sorry to find could not be invaded without great difficulty ; but as to the former he understood it was to be the next object of enterprise : now he would be happy to learn whether after the thirteen colonies had been invaded, without advancing our grand object a single step, ministers would at last consent to relinquish this most destructive war. If he could only obtain an assurance of that, he would readily consent to an attempt on

Virginia, and think he made a good bargain for his constituents.

The honorable gentleman adverted to an expression of lord GEORGE GERMAINE on a former day, that ministers surely could not want disposition to a peace, as they had a stake in the hedge. Perhaps it might be objected to him, that not having a stake in the country, he was not sincere in his professions; and that his arguments ought therefore to be disregarded. It was very true that his personal interest, his personal stake in the country was very small: he would, however, claim the praise of as sincere a regard for his country as any man in it, be his fortune what it may; and he conceived that his proposition would not be less attended to, because he himself had not the wealth of those men, who had been accumulating princely fortunes by the calamities of their country. But if he had no stake, the respectable body of men whom he had the honour to represent, and whose interests he was appointed to guard, had a stake for which it became him to be solicitous. The city of Westminster was materially affected by the continuance of the war. They had suffered most severely in the struggle, and he knew that he spoke their wishes, when he recommended to ministers to take every possible means of reconciling us with our brethren in America.

After a variety of other arguments, he moved, "That this House do resolve itself into a committee to consider of the American war;" and intimated his intention of moving in the committee, should it be appointed, a resolution, "that his Majesty's ministers ought immediately to take every possible measure for concluding peace with our American colonies."

He observed, that his proposition differed essentially from that suggested by his honorable friend on a former occasion, for that only provided power to ministers, when the will was wanting; but this laid a parliamentary in-

junction on them, to supply want of inclination, and left them to apply for power, if they should find any necessity for so doing. He hoped the noble lords in administration would not object against any measures tending to peace, though they were a disgrace or humiliation to them: they were blackened enough already, and surely, in his opinion, it could not do much harm to add one more disgrace to the many already sustained. He hoped also not to be answered, as on former occasions, by saying, that ministers had a large stake in the country; for it was not their stakes, but those of their constituents for which they were playing: for his own part, it was well known he had no stake to lose, but that should not abate his zeal for the public interest; on the present occasion, he asked no credit for any assertion he had made, but referred for every thing to the authority of the gazette, and on that rested his argument.

The motion was vehemently opposed by lord WESTCOTE, Mr. RIGBY, lord GEORGE GERMAINE, and other members on the ministerial side, some of whom having in their speeches misrepresented the political opinions of the lately deceased earl of CHATHAM, his youngest son [WILLIAM PITT] made the following reply:

“He was induced,” he said, “to rise from certain expressions, which had fallen from a right honorable gentleman on the floor [Mr. RIGBY] and another gentleman on the other side of the house [Mr. ADAM] respecting the ministerial and legislative conduct of a dear and most respected relation of his [lord CHATHAM] with regard to the American war, and the progressive measures which had produced it. He thought it was his duty, as the son of that noble lord, and as a member of that House, to rise upon the occasion, to correct the gentlemen who had spoken, and to prevent the House from going away under a persuasion, that the conduct and sentiments of the noble lord were such as had been described.

The silence of one so nearly connected and allied in blood and affection might seem to countenance what had been so confidently but erroneously stated. There might be many gentlemen in the House, who were well acquainted with the political opinions of that noble person. To them no refutations of the assertions of this night would be necessary; but there might be some who were perfectly ignorant of them; or who knowing them but imperfectly, might be deceived by misrepresentations, perhaps unintentionally made.

“ Actuated by these motives, he thought it incumbent to state his relation’s opinion, as it appeared in his public conduct, and as it came further confirmed by private communication made to himself and the rest of his family. The noble person, whose name had been so often mentioned in the course of the evening, most heartily reprobated the American war in all its parts; as well on the principle on which it was taken up, as its progress, and the ultimate objects to which it pointed. He had expressed himself uniformly so on the subject; and he was persuaded never gave a vote or opinion in contradiction to those sentiments. Those who acted with him, well know it. There were many living testimonies of the truth of this assertion; and innumerable circumstances could be adduced, if farther evidence were required. The only opinion declared by him, which could have afforded the most distant color for such an assertion, was, that he thought this country had a right to lay duties for the regulation of commerce—duties incidental to the extension of trade, calculated for the mutual benefits of both countries; but not a single tax or duty of any kind for the purpose of raising a revenue in America to be remitted home, and to be disposable by the British parliament. This, however, was but a speculative question, totally different and distinct from the doctrines which were productive of the war. Those at least which produced the

riot at Boston, from whence it was acknowledged by every side of the House the war originated, did not come within the above description. They were taxes on the import, laid on expressly by the British parliament, collected under its authority, and intended for the British treasury, and were not even pretended to hold out any advantage to both countries, but to one only; neither were they directed to promote or extend the commerce of America, but merely to draw out of the pockets of the inhabitants of that country certain sums of money for augmenting the revenue of this. These were the true and genuine sentiments of the noble person alluded to. To assert, therefore, that because he approved of one mode of conduct which was not adopted, he approved of another system which he had so frequently and openly reprobated, was a most extraordinary kind of logic, indeed. But he could not think that those who argued in this manner, expected to bring home conviction to the breast of any man who had not before been made a convert to their opinions."

After thus explaining his noble father's principles and conduct, he proceeded to speak to the question. He said, "some gentlemen had passed the highest eulogiums on the American war. Its justice was defended in the most warm and fervent manner indeed. A noble lord [lord WESTCOTE] who spoke early, in the heat of his zeal had called it a holy war. For his part, though the honorable gentleman who made the motion, and some other gentlemen, had been more than once in the course of the debate severely reprehended for calling it a wicked and accursed war, he was persuaded, and would affirm, that it was a most cursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war. It was conceived in injustice: it was nurtured and brought forth in folly: its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution, and devastation: in truth, every thing which went to

constitute moral depravity and human turpitude, was to be found in it. It was pregnant with misery of every kind. The mischiefs, however, recoiled on the unhappy people of this country who were made the instruments, by which the wicked purposes of its authors were effected. The nation was drained of its best blood and of its vital resources of men and money. The expense of it was enormous, much beyond any former experience; and yet, what had the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats—victories celebrated only by a temporary triumph over our brethren, whom we would trample down and destroy; which filled the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valuable relations, slain in the impious cause of enforcing unconditional submission; or with narratives of the glorious exertions of men, struggling in the holy cause of liberty, though struggling under all the difficulties and disadvantages which in general are deemed the necessary concomitants of victory and success. Where was the Englishman, on reading the narratives of those bloody and well-fought contests, who could refrain from lamenting the loss of so much British blood, spilt in such a cause? or from weeping on whatever side victory might be declared? Add to this melancholy consideration, that on which ever side we looked, we could perceive nothing but our natural and powerful enemies, or luke-warm and faithless friends rejoicing in our calamities, or meditating our ultimate downfall.”

He said, “ he had taken the present opportunity of delivering his sentiments on the American war. There was not a point of view in which he considered it, there was not a feature which presented itself to his notice, but served the more and more to confirm him in the opinion he had early formed concerning its mischievous and destructive tendency; and he trusted the present opinion he had given would be received, as it was sincerely in-

tended, as fully expressive of his principles, so far as they might be applicable, or seemed to bear a relation to the American war, in all its future, as well as former stages."

He made several detached observations on the grounds and motives, on which the honorable gentleman [Mr. Fox] had supported his motion; but seemed chiefly to rest his arguments on the injustice of the war in its outset, the innumerable mischiefs it had already been productive of, and the still more fatal and disastrous events it might bring with it, if ministers or the nation should persevere in urging a war, which, whether successful or not, ought not to be further pursued, because it was totally subversive of the true constitutional connection by which both countries were united.

Mr. Fox's proposition was negatived by a majority of 172—to 99.

We shall close this selection from the debates during the American war with a summary of the speeches of Mr. Fox, Mr. PITT, and Mr. BURKE, on the address in November 1781, just after intelligence had been received of the surrender of lord CORNWALLIS's army in Virginia, though the speech from the throne was still expressive of confidence, and called for the concurrence and support of parliament, and a vigorous, animated, and united exertion of the faculties and resources of the people.

In opposing a ministerial echo of this speech, Mr. Fox said, "he had expected, and he knew it had been expected by many others, to hear on this occasion his Majesty declare from the throne, that he had been deceived and imposed upon by misinformation and misrepresentation; that in consequence of his delusion, the parliament had been deluded; but that now the deception was at an end; and requesting of his parliament to devise the most speedy and efficacious means of putting an end to the public calamities; instead of which they had heard a speech breath-

ing little else than vengeance, misery, and blood. Those *who were ignorant of the personal character of the Sovereign*, and who imagined this speech to originate with him, might be led to suppose that he was an unfeeling despot, rejoicing in the horrid sacrifice of the liberty and lives of his subjects, who, when all hope of victory was vanished, still thirsted for revenge. The ministers, who advised this speech, he affirmed to be a curse to the country, over the affairs of which they had too long been suffered to preside. From that unrivalled pre-eminence which we so lately possessed, they had made us the object of ridicule and scorn to the surrounding nations. The noble lord in the blue ribband had indeed thought fit to ascribe the American war and all its attendant calamities to the speeches of Opposition. Oh! wretched and incapable minister, whose measures are framed with so little foresight, and executed with so little firmness, that because a rash and intemperate invective is uttered against them in the House of Commons, they shall instantly crumble in pieces, and bring down ruin upon the country! Miserable statesman! to allow for no contingencies of fortune, no ebullition of passion, no collision of sentiment! Could he expect the concurrence of every individual in that House? and was he so weak or wicked, as to contrive plans of government of such a texture, that the intervention of circumstances, obvious and unavoidable, would occasion their total failure, and hazard the existence of the empire? Ministers must expect to hear of the calamities in which they had involved the empire, again and again—not merely in that House, but as he trusted at the tribunal of justice; “for,” said he, “the time will surely come, when an oppressed and irritated people will firmly call for **SIGNAL PUNISHMENT** on those whose counsels have brought the nation so near to the brink of destruction. An indignant nation will surely in

the end compel them to make some faint atonement for the magnitude of their offences on a PUBLIC SCAFFOLD."

He concluded with moving, "That of the Address proposed, the whole be omitted, excepting the first paragraph, and the following words inserted: "And we will, without delay, apply ourselves, with united hearts to propose and digest such counsels as may in this crisis excite the efforts, point the arms, and by a total change of system, command the confidence of all his Majesty's subjects."

This amendment was vigorously supported by Mr. PITT, who declared, "that the duty he owed his Sovereign, and his country, compelled him to exert every effort to prevent the House from precipitately voting an address, which pledged them to the support of that fatal system, which had led his country, step by step, to the most calamitous and disgraceful situation to which a once flourishing and glorious empire could be reduced. Was it becoming the parliament of a free people to echo back the words which a minister, long practised in the arts of delusion, had dared to put into the Royal mouth? He implored the House not to vote for an address fraught with treachery and falsehood, which could not have been framed by any who felt for the honor of the King, the dignity of parliament, or the interest of the nation."

Mr. BURKE drew a most striking picture of the losses and disasters which had been sustained through the egregious folly and misconduct of the present administration. "Under such circumstances, the language held by the noble lord was," he said, "audacious; it was insulting." Mr. BURKE declared, "that he deplored and mourned over the calamities of his country; but to see the noble lord stand up in the face of day, and hear him IMPUDENTLY vindicate the measures which had given birth to them--this was most of all alarming; this it was which froze his blood, and harrowed up his soul."

Mr. BURKE ridiculed with keen and exquisite poignancy the stress so absurdly laid on the supposed original and inherent right of Great Britain to exercise taxation over America. "Oh! inestimable right," exclaimed Mr. BURKE, "Oh! wonderful, transcendent right, the assertion of which has cost this country thirteen provinces, six islands, one hundred thousand lives, and seventy millions of money! Oh invaluable right! for the sake of which we have sacrificed our rank among nations, our importance abroad, and our happiness at home! Oh right! more dear to us than our existence, which has already cost us so much, and which seems likely to cost us our all. Infatuated man!" cried Mr. BURKE, fixing his eye on the minister, "miserable and undone country! not to know that the claim of right, without the power of enforcing it, is nugatory and idle. We had a right to tax America, the noble lord tells us; therefore we ought to tax America. This is the profound logic which comprises the whole chain of his reasoning. Not inferior to this was the wisdom of him who resolved to shear the wolf. What! shear a wolf! Have you considered the resistance, the difficulty, the danger of the attempt? No, says the madman, I have considered nothing but the right. Man has a right of dominion over the beasts of the forest; and therefore I will shear the wolf. How wonderful that a nation could be thus deluded. But the noble lord dealt in cheats and delusions. They were the daily traffic of his invention; and he would continue to play off his CHEATS on this House, so long as he thought them necessary to his purpose, and so long as he had money enough at command to bribe gentlemen to pretend that they believed him. But a black and bitter day of reckoning would surely come; and whenever that day came, he trusted he should be able, by a PARLIAMENTARY IMPEACHMENT, to bring upon the heads of the authors of our calamities, the punishment they deserved."

CHAPTER VI.

PEACE OF 1783.

IN the speech from the throne on the 5th of *December* 1782, his Majesty having informed parliament that he had concluded with the Americans provisional articles of peace, by which they were acknowledged free and independent states, some severe remarks were made in the House of Peers on the inconsistency of the minister, [Lord *SHELBURNE*] who had at a former period strongly opposed the recognition of American independence. To this reproach his lordship replied, "that he had exerted every effort to preserve America to this country;" and with great animation exclaimed, "that he had not voluntarily yielded up this independency: he had merely submitted to the controlling power of necessity and fate. It was not I," said he, "that made this cession: it was the evil star of Britain—it was the blunders of a former administration—it was the power of revolted subjects; and the mighty arms of house of Bourbon."

But the minister had to defend himself against much more pointed attacks when the preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain were submitted to the consideration of the two Houses, in February 1783. The various articles were reprobated as derogatory from the dignity, and in the highest degree injurious to the interests of the nation. The dereliction of the loyalists of America and the Indians our allies, was said to be a baseness unexampled in the records of history. In the lowest ebb of distress we ought not to

have subscribed to terms so ignominious. FRANCIS I. when conquered and a captive, wrote, "that all was lost except his honor;" and his magnanimity finally re-established his fortune. The folly of our negotiations was every where apparent. In Africa, our trade was surrendered to France, by the cession of Senegal and Goree,—in Asia, Pondicherry was not only given back, but to render the boon more acceptable, a large territory was made to accompany it—in America, the prohibitions against fortifying St. Pierre and Miquelon were removed, and the limits of the French fishery were extended: and under pretence of drawing a boundary line the treaty grants to the United States an immense tract of country inhabited by more than twenty Indian nations.—In the West Indies, St. Lucia was relinquished, which was of such military importance that so long as we retained this island in our hands, we might well have stood upon the *uti possidetis* as the basis of negotiation in that quarter.—The cession of East Florida to Spain was an extravagance, for which it was impossible to find even the shadow of a pretence. To complete the whole, France was allowed to repair and fortify the harbour of Dunkirk, which, in the event of a future war, might annoy our trade in its centre, and counteract all the advantage of our local situation for foreign commerce; and, what is most wonderful, all these sacrifices are made upon the professed ground of arranging matters on the principles of RECIPROCITY!

The minister defended himself from these various attacks with great vigor and ability. His lordship declared, "That PEACE was the object for which the nation at large had discovered the most unequivocal desire: the end he had in view was the advantage of his country, and he was certain that he had attained it. The vast uncultivated tract of land to the southward of the lakes," his lordship said, was of infinite consequence to America, and none to

England ; and the retention of it, or even the forts which commanded it, could only have laid the foundation of future hostility. If our liberality to Ireland was the subject of just applause, why act upon principles of illiberality to America ? The refusal of the Newfoundland fishery would have been a direct manifestation of hostile intentions ; and as it lay on their coasts, it was in reality impossible to exclude them from it by any restrictions : it is an advantage which nature has given them, and to attempt to wrest it from them would not only be unjust, but impracticable. Of one objection his lordship acknowledged he deeply felt the force. His regret and compassion for the situation of the unhappy loyalists were as pungent as those of their warmest advocates. This objection admitted of only one answer, which he had given to his own bleeding heart : " It is better that a part should suffer, rather than the whole empire perish." He would have dashed from him the bitter cup which the adversities of his country held out to him, if peace had not been absolutely necessary ; if it had not been called for with an unanimity and vigor that could not be resisted. No arts of address or negotiation had been neglected, but the American commissioners had no power to concede farther. The Congress itself had not the power ; for by the constitution of America, every state was supreme, including in itself the legislative and judicial powers ; its jurisdiction therefore was not liable to control. In the mode of interposition, by recommendation alone could Congress act. If after all, the loyalists should not be received into the bosom of their native country, Britain penetrated with gratitude for their services, and warm with the feelings of humanity, would afford them an asylum ; and it would doubtless be wiser to indemnify them for their losses, than to ruin the nation by a renewal or prolongation of the calamities of war. The cession of East Florida, his lordship said, was rendered unavoidable by the mistaken and

ruinous policy of those ministers who had brought the nation under the miserable necessity of treating with its enemies on terms very different from those it could formerly have commanded. This province, detached from Western Florida already conquered by the arms of Spain, was however of trivial value; and the amounts of its imports and exports bore no proportion to the expense of its civil establishment. We had nevertheless obtained a compensation in the restitution of the Bahamas. Although the bounds of the French fishery were somewhat extended, by far the most eligible parts of the Newfoundland coast were left in possession of the English, and a source of future contention removed by the exact ascertainment of limits. In exchange for St. Lucia, France had restored six of the seven islands she had taken, and only retained Tobago, Senegal, and Goree, which had been originally French settlements, but their commerce was inconsiderable; and the whole African trade was open to the English, by our settlements on the river Gambia, which were guaranteed to us by this treaty. The restoration of Pondicherry, and of our other conquests in the East, must be acknowledged not a measure of expediency so much as of absolute necessity, if the state of the East India Company were adverted to. Such had been the formidable confederacy, against which they had been compelled to contend, such the wretched derangement of their finances, and so exposed to hazard were their vast and precarious possessions, that nothing but peace could recover to them their ascendancy in Asia: in such a situation, it was impossible to procure terms of accommodation more honorable. The removal of the restraints relative to the harbour of Dunkirk—restraints disgraceful to France, and of trifling advantage to England, was inveighed against without candor or reason. Dunkirk, as a port, was, as his lordship asserted, far from possessing the consequence attached to it: it lies near a shoaly part of the channel; it

cannot receive ships of a large size, and can never be a rendezvous for squadrons: it may indeed be a resort for *privateers*, but these we know by experience could easily issue from other ports. In fine, the confederacy formed against us was decidedly superior to our utmost exertions; our taxes were exorbitant; our debts, funded and unfunded, amounted to two hundred and forty seven millions; our commerce was rapidly declining; our navy was overbalanced by the fleets of the combined powers, in the alarming proportion of more than fifty ships of the line. Peace was in these circumstances necessary to our existence as a nation. The best terms of accommodation, which our situation would admit, had been procured; and his lordship ventured to affirm, that they could be decried or opposed only by ignorance, prejudice, or faction.

On a division, the address was carried by a majority of 72 to 59 voices.

CHAPTER VII.

ON TOLERATION.

SPEECH OF DR. SHIPLEY, BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH, IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL FOR ENLARGING THE TOLERATION ACT, IN THE SESSION OF 1779.

THE indulgence shewn to the Roman Catholics in the preceding session made the refusal of former claims of the Protestant Dissenters appear so invidious, that it was judged improper any longer to discourage an application for their relief; and on the motion of Sir HENRY HOUGHTON, seconded by Mr. FREDERIC MONTAGUE, a bill for that purpose was brought in, and passed through both Houses with very little opposition. The debate in the Lords was rendered memorable by the following speech of Doctor SHIPLEY :

This reverend prelate expressed his most cordial acquiescence in the repeal of those penal laws which had long been the disgrace of the national church: he objected only to the condition annexed to the repeal, the IMPOSITION of a confession of faith, however short, and general, and true, such as he hoped he should have the virtue, if called upon, to seal with his blood. But his lordship absolutely disclaimed for himself any authority civil or sacred to impose this creed upon other men. By such imposition the present bill, which professes to repeal all former penal laws, is converted into a penal law itself: for those, who do not subscribe the declaration, still remain liable to all the old pe-

nalties. The truth contained in the declaration, viz. —“ That the scriptures are the revealed will of God, and the rule of faith and practice,” was indeed acknowledged by every Protestant. But supposing the existence of any set of Christians who should reject our canon of scripture, who should build their faith on the basis of tradition, or on the supposed illuminations of the spirit, would you, my lords, persecute them for believing Christianity upon arguments that suit their own understandings? Such men would undoubtedly be in error, but error in religion is the very ground and subject of toleration. The evils resulting from this declaration are not however confined to possibilities. Many of the most eminent of the dissenting ministers—men highly deserving esteem for their science, their literature, their critical study of the Scriptures, for their excellent writings in defence of Christianity, as well as of the civil, and religious rights of mankind—men, whom it would be no disparagement to this Bench to acknowledge as friends and brethren, engaged in the same honorable and arduous task of instructing the world in the ways of happiness—such men as these, my lords, if the clause in question be enacted and carried into execution, will not even be tolerated. Declaring, as they have invariably done, against all human authority in matters of religion, and holding it as a first principle of protestantism that no church has a right to impose its own articles of faith upon others, they conceive that an acquiescence in this declaration would imply a recognition of that claim which they are bound, as Christians, and protestants to resist. It is the duty of magistrates, it is indeed the very end of magistracy to protect *all men* in the enjoyment of their natural rights, of which the free exercise of their religion is one of the first and best. All history, my lords, is full of the mischiefs occasioned by the want of toleration; but no one has ever yet pre-

tended to shew, that any public evils have been occasioned by toleration. At a meeting of the Right Reverend Bench, where I had the honor to be present, it was asked, whether the clause in question was ever intended to be put in execution? It was answered, No—there was no such intention. I asked then, and I ask now, What was the use of making laws that were never to be executed? To make useless and insignificant laws is not to exercise authority, but to degrade it: it is a vain, idle, and insolent parade of legislation; and yet, my lords, would to God! the four last shameful and miserable years had been employed in making such laws as these: this wretched country might still have been safe, and perhaps once more might have been happy. But, my lords, let us for a moment consider to whom this power of prescribing articles of faith is to be confided: undoubtedly this holy deposit cannot fail to be lodged, where we have placed every thing else that is great, and good: the honor, the interest, the strength, and revenues of the nation, ALL are placed in the keeping of the ministry. Perhaps, my lords, there might be ministers to whose management none, who have the least value for their religion, would choose to confide it. One might naturally ask a minister for a good pension, or a good contract, or a place at court; but hardly any one would think of making interest with him for a place in HEAVEN. What I now say applies only to future bad ministers, for of the present administration I most firmly believe that they are fully as capable of defining articles of faith as of directing the councils of the state. The ruling party is always very liberal in bestowing the title of schismatic and heretic on those who differ from them in religion, and in representing them as dangerous to the state. My lords, the contrary is the truth. Those who are uppermost and have the power, are the men who do the mischief, while the schismatics only suffer and

complain. Ask who has brought the affairs of this country into the present calamitous state? Who are the men that have plundered and depopulated Bengal? Who are they that have turned a whole continent, inhabited by friends and kindred, into our bitterest enemies? Yes, they who have shorn the strength, and cut off the right arm of Britain, were all members of the ESTABLISHED CHURCH, all orthodox men. I am not afraid of those tender and scrupulous consciences who are over cautious of professing or believing too much: if they are sincerely in the wrong, I forgive their errors, and respect their integrity. The men I am afraid of are the men who believe every thing, who subscribe every thing, and who VOTE for every thing.

On the 28th of March 1787, Mr. BEAUFOY brought forward a motion for amending, and in part repealing the Corporation and Test Acts. His speech on the occasion was much admired for its modesty, as well as its argumentative force and eloquence.

“ I am sensible,” said he, “ Mr. Speaker, that in a business so important as that upon which we are this day assembled, it might have been expected that the large proportion of the inhabitants of this kingdom, who are now by my voice suitors to the House, would have been more studious of experience and ability in their advocate. It may naturally excite surprise, that in a cause which so deeply concerns their interests and their honor, they should have committed the management of their suit to a man of so little pretensions to parliamentary skill, and of talents to humble as mine.

“ Sir, their conduct admits of only one explanation: they have confidence in the justice of their cause, and they have equal confidence in the candor and liberality of the House. They know that in addressing the most enlightened men of the most enlightened age, the artificial aids of rhetoric cannot be necessary to enforce the argu-

ments of reason. They know that in addressing a parliament which possesses, beyond any that ever assembled within these walls, the confidence and affection of the people—a parliament under whose auspices and by whose guidance this kingdom, to the disappointment of her enemies, and the astonishment of the world, has recovered from her desolated state—a parliament whose decisions proclaim to every part of the empire, that under their government no individual shall be deprived of his rights without just cause, nor penalties be inflicted without the commission of a crime: they know that in addressing such a parliament, it will be sufficient for them to prove, that, contrary to the first principles of justice, they are subjected to punishment, without the imputation of guilt; amerced of the common privileges of citizens, without the suspicion of offence; and condemned to perpetual degradation and dishonor, unless they will consent to incur the guilt of renouncing that right of private judgment in matters of religion, which the God of nature has given them.

“ Three different classes of our fellow-subjects are aggrieved by those provisions in our laws, of which I shall propose the repeal.

“ The first is composed of all those Englishmen, who are dissenters from the church of England.

“ The second is composed of all the members of the established church of Scotland.

“ The third consists of all those respectable clergymen of the church of England, who think that the prostitution of the most solemn ordinance of their faith to the purposes of a civil test is little less than a sacrilegious abuse.

“ Of these several descriptions of my fellow-citizens, entitled as they all are to particular regard, the Dissenters have the first claim to my attention; for they have publicly requested—a request which they confined to their

own case—lest they should be thought presumptuous in expressing the complaints of others—they have publicly requested, that I would submit to the consideration of parliament the propriety of relieving from penalties of disqualification and reproach so many hundred thousands of his majesty's ardently loyal, and affectionate subjects.

“ Thus authorised, I am happy in the outset of our deliberations to declare, that the grievances, of which the Dissenters complain, are of a *civil*, and not of an *ecclesiastical* nature. They humbly solicit a restoration of their *civil rights*, not an enlargement of their *ecclesiastical privileges*. It is of consequence that this fact should be distinctly stated and clearly understood; for the very word *dissenter* leads so naturally to the supposition that these complaints are of an ecclesiastical kind, and their acknowledged merit as citizens so naturally excludes the idea of its being possible that the law should have deprived them of any of their civil rights, that I feel myself under a necessity of stating, at the very threshold of the business, that their prayer has nothing ecclesiastical for its object. They wish not to diminish the provision which the legislature has made for the established church; nor do they envy her the revenue she enjoys, or the ecclesiastical privileges of dignity and honor with which she is invested. If their aim had been to attack the rights of others, and not merely to recover their own, they would not have chosen a member of the church of England, for their advocate, nor could I have accepted such a trust. So far are they indeed from trespassing on the rights of OTHERS, that even the restitution of their OWN, they did not solicit till the public tranquillity was completely restored, and till a season of leisure from other avocations had afforded the legislature a convenient opportunity of considering the hardships by which they are aggrieved. That men of acknowledged merit, as citizens of known attachment to the constitution, and of zealous loyalty to

the Sovereign, should at no time solicit relief from unmerited disabilities and undeserved reproach, is not to be expected from the Dissenters, for it is not to be expected from human nature ; but in praying for that relief, they have chosen the time which they thought the most convenient to parliament, and the mode which they deemed the most respectful to the House. United in sentiment on this occasion, to a degree which I believe is unexampled in any other body of men, and hitherto unknown among themselves, and forming in most of the towns of England a large proportion of the inhabitants, they did not choose to crowd your table with petitions ; they wished to owe their success, not to the number of the claimants, but to the equity of the claim ; and they have observed, that justice never pleads more powerfully with the House, than when she approaches accompanied only by her own complete perfections."

Here Mr. BEAUFOY introduced a clear and concise narrative of the origin of the obnoxious acts. "The corporation act," said he, "declared that no person should be elected into any municipal office, who should not, one year before his election, have taken the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England. The Test act required of every person accepting a civil or military office under the crown to take the sacrament in like manner within a limited time, in default of which he was liable to a fine of 500*l.* and incurred other penalties in the highest degree severe and rigorous. The first of these acts was passed in the year 1661 ; and the despotic and arbitrary spirit in which it was framed, sufficiently appeared from a single clause in the act, empowering the King for a limited time to remove at his pleasure all municipal officers by commissioners of his appointment. This act was levelled indiscriminately against Protestant, and Catholic dissenters ; but in the year 1673, the æra of the Test act, the state of things was materially changed. The

jealousy of parliament, in regard to the Protestant dissenters, had now subsided, and the alarm of all the different denominations of Protestants was equally excited by the dangers to which Protestantism itself was exposed by the flagrant attempts of the court, to effect the restoration of the Popish religion. The King himself was believed on good ground to be nothing better than a concealed Papist. The duke of YORK, his brother, and immediate successor to the crown, was not only an avowed convert to that religion, but a flaming and furious zealot. Lord CLIFFORD, the first minister, and other persons high in authority were also bigoted Papists; and a declaration of indulgence had been published by the King, in order to make way for the introduction of Popery. In these circumstances, the Test act was a measure of national policy and safety. It bore the title of an act for preventing the danger which may happen from Popish Recusants; and the dissenters, far from concurring in the opposition made by the court to this bill, publicly declared, through the medium of Mr. Alderman LOVE, one of the members for the city of London, and himself a Dissenter, that in a time of public danger they would in no wise impede the progress of a measure deemed essential to the safety of the kingdom; and *though they were accidentally included in the operation of it*, they would waive their claim to an exemption, trusting to the good faith, justice, and humanity of parliament, that a future provision should be made for their relief. This seasonable declaration extremely facilitated the passing of the bill, and was received with just and generous applause. A bill for their relief was accordingly at a subsequent period of the session passed by the commons, but defeated by the sudden prorogation of parliament. A second bill was in a succeeding parliament brought in, and passed by both Houses; but while it lay ready for the royal assent, the King degraded his dignity so far as secretly to order

the clerk of the crown to withdraw the bill ; and the parliament being soon after dissolved, it never passed into a law. But the relief which the unprincipled profligacy of CHARLES refused to grant, the magnanimity of WILLIAM was impatient to bestow. In one of his earliest speeches from the throne, he expressed his earnest hope, that such alteration would be made in the laws, as would leave room for the admission of all his protestant subjects who were willing to serve him. But at this period the High Church and Tory interest predominated, in opposition to the wise and salutary policy of the court. From the memorable protest of the lords upon this subject, in the year 1689, it appeared, nevertheless, that the sentiments of several of the greatest men in that extraordinary æra coincided with those of their Sovereign. And upon another occasion of a still later date, a conference between the two Houses upon the bill of occasional conformity, the Peers (not a few individuals only of that assembly, but the whole House) expressed in language still more emphatical, their abhorrence of the injustice of the Test act.

In discussing the general policy of this new law, Mr. BEAUFOY observed, " that to the higher trust of legislative authority the Dissenters were admitted without reserve. From the members of that House, from the members of the House of Peers, no religious test was required. Hence he strongly inferred the absurdity of the imposition in question. He had heard, indeed, of an idle opinion, that there was something of a republican tendency, of an anti-monarchical bias, in the very doctrines of the Presbyterian church. From so vague an assertion he appealed to experience. Were the Scots suspected of an indifference to monarchy ? He had heard them taxed with a predilection for those maxims of policy which were the most favourable to power ; but of levelling principles, of republican attachments, he had never heard them accused. The English Dissenters, since the revo-

lution which had first given this country a constitution, had uniformly acted on principles the most beneficial, and had constantly proved themselves the ardent supporters and the faithful adherents of that system of monarchy which was established by law. Would then the repeal of the Test act prove injurious to the established church? **GOD FORBID!** The suggested repeal was no attack upon the rights of others: it was merely the completion of that wise system of toleration, adopted at the æra of the revolution. The church of England flourished long before the Test act existed. In Scotland no such law ever had a being. Had Scotland therefore no established church? In Ireland the relief now solicited had been granted seven years ago. But was the church of Ireland therefore destroyed? In Holland, in Russia, in Prussia, in Hanover, no traces of such a test were to be found. In the dominions of the Emperor, all disqualifications of this nature had been recently abolished. In France a similar relief was granted by the edict of Nantz, from the revocation of which France had so severely suffered, and which was now, as it was supposed, about to be restored. Shall then England alone adhere to an exploded system, which all the other enlightened nations of Europe, upon a full conviction of its weakness, have already abandoned, or are now preparing to abandon? Shall foreigners still be employed to fight her battles? Shall the Hessian sword again be called upon to protect her from invasions, while so many thousands of her own people, willing to bleed in her cause, and impatient to hazard their lives in her defence, are excluded from her service? "One proof of the absurdity, of the incredible folly of these inhuman statutes," added Mr. **BEAUFAY**, "presses so strongly on my thoughts, that I cannot refrain from submitting it to the consideration of the House. The benevolent Mr. **HOWARD**, he upon whom every kingdom in Europe (England excepted) would gladly confer at least

the common privileges of a citizen, and whom the proudest nation might be happy to call her own—he of whom a right honorable member of this House has said, ‘ He has visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples—not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur—not to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art—not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts—but to dive into the depths of dungeons—to plunge into the infection of hospitals—to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain—to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt—to remember the forgotten—to attend to the neglected—to visit the forsaken—and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries.’ He, even he, is denied in England, the common rights of a subject: he is incapable of legal admission into any office: and the consequence is, that his zeal for his country having led him a few years since to brave the penalties of the law, and to serve her in a troublesome and expensive civil employment, without the sacramental qualification, which his religious persuasions would not permit him to take, the penalties of the Test act are still hanging over him; and I fear that even now, on his return to his native country, amidst the plaudits of an admiring world, it is in the power of any desperate informer, who is willing to take that road to wealth and damnation, which the legislature has pointed out and recommended to his choice, I fear it is in the power of every such informer to prosecute him to conviction, and to bring upon him those dreadful penalties which constitute the punishment of an *out-law*. God forbid, that, in the view of all Europe, such indelible dishonor should be brought upon the British name.”

“ Thus have I stated (too much at large, perhaps, but the importance of the subject will plead my excuse,) the merits of the Dissenters’ case. I have shewn the nature

of those provisions in the Test and Corporation acts, from which they supplicate relief, and have described the dreadful penalties which these acts have imposed : I have shewn at what periods, and under what circumstances, these afflictive laws were passed : I have proved, that of the Test act the Dissenters were not the objects : and that of the Corporation act, which, for the space of three years established despotism by law, the alleged necessity has no longer the pretence of truth. I have also proved, that, after the proposed repeal, all those who cannot take the abjuration oath, which operates as a bar to all but Christians, and make the declarations, which excludes the Catholics, will continue as completely rejected as before ; and that even their willingness to give these pledges of attachment to the laws will avail them nothing, unless, in the estimation of their Sovereign, their merit shall be such as to render them worthy of an employment in his service. I have likewise shewn, that the repeal will increase the strength of the kingdom, by enabling his Majesty to bring into action the talents and affections of all his Protestant subjects ; and that it will also give additional security to the church. Whoever, then, shall be of opinion, that the general voice of all the enlightened nations of Europe is deserving of regard ; whoever shall admit, that the exertions of the whole kingdom will have greater avail than its mutilated strength ; whoever is convinced, that union is better than separation, that power is preferable to weakness, and that national justice is the surest ground of national prosperity, will agree with me in thinking that the law which excludes the Dissenters from civil and military employments ought to be repealed.

“ The grievances of two other descriptions of persons, whose importance in the community cannot be disputed, and the reasonableness of whose plea is too obvious to require any length of discussion, still remain to be mentioned.

“ By the Test and Corporation acts no native of Scotland, who is of the established church of that country, can be admitted to any office in England, or to the army, or navy, in any part of Great Britain, unless he will publicly profess a different religion from his own. Yet the offices of the state are the offices of Great Britain; for the salaries of the persons who fill them are paid by taxes levied on Great Britain. The army too, and the navy, are the army and navy of Great Britain; for in the burden of their payment, Scotland undoubtedly bears her part. Hence it is evident, that, by the Test act, an English restriction is imposed on a British office: an English restriction is imposed on the British navy: an English restriction is imposed on the army of Great Britain. Englishmen, residing in Scotland, are entitled to all the privileges of Scotchmen; for neither the late Chief Baron ORD, who presided in the Court of Exchequer there, nor Mr. WHARTON, who is one of the present commissioners of excise in North Britain, nor any other Englishman who fills a public office in that country, was obliged to renounce the church of England, in order to qualify himself for the trust: it is justly considered as a British trust; and upon it, therefore, no Scotch restriction is imposed. Why then should the naval or the military service of the United Kingdoms be fettered with English restraints? Or why should English conditions be annexed to the possession of a British office? There is neither common justice, nor common sense in the measure.

“ I have heard it said, from a confusion of ideas which is scarcely credible, that to grant a remission, in favour of Scotland, of the Test and Corporation acts, would be a breach of the Union—an opinion which supposes that because by the articles of the Union nothing can be taken from Scotland but what was then stipulated, therefore nothing can be given. It supposes that if, in a private bargain, I have engaged to concede certain points to my

neighbour, I am therefore bound by that bargain to concede to him nothing more : it supposes that, if my agreement with him gives me a right of common on his manor, I violate my compact, if I afterwards voluntarily offer him a right of common upon mine. Are we told that the Test and Corporation acts are among the statutes which secure the doctrines, discipline, worship, and government of the established church of England, and are therefore by the act of Union declared to be unalterable? Sir, the government and discipline, the doctrines and the worship of the English church were the same before the statutes were enacted, and would continue the same if those statutes were repealed; and consequently do not derive their security from them; whereas the act which relates to the patronage of the church of Scotland, and which did seem to affect its discipline, was held to be no breach of the articles of Union; neither was that Union understood to be weakened by the subsequent act, which gave a complete toleration in Scotland to episcopal dissenters. When the articles of Union were under the consideration of parliament, a proposal was made in the House of Lords that the perpetual continuance of the Test act, and in the House of Commons that the perpetual continuance of the act of Corporation, should be declared a fundamental condition of the intended Union; but the motions were both rejected—a proof that the legislature did not mean to give to them the same perpetual existence as to the act of Uniformity, and to the statute that was passed in the 13th of ELIZABETH; both of which were specifically named as conditions of the compact, and expressly declared irrevocable. If the Test and Corporation laws are deemed unalterable parts of the articles of Union, it follows of course, that every alteration in those laws must be deemed a breach of the Union, and that every suspension of those laws must be considered as a suspension of the Union. Now both these acts are altered, and in part

repealed, by subsequent statutes, and, for six months in almost every year, are wholly suspended; but who will assert, that the articles of Union are dissolved, or that their obligation on the two countries is suspended for six months in every year? or who will deny, that the same power, which alters a part, may alter the whole of these laws? Who will deny, that the same authority, which suspends a law for six months, may abolish it for ever? That many of the natives of North Britain, who are members of the established church, have taken the sacrament, as a qualification for naval or military employments, I readily admit; for those men, who consider the service of their country as the first of all duties, and their obligation to their Sovereign as the first of all bonds, will make great sacrifices indeed, rather than forego the right of bearing their part in the general defence of the kingdom. But does it therefore follow, that the necessity of making these sacrifices is no hardship? Does it therefore follow, that he, who renounces the religion rather than renounce the service of his country, has no reason to complain of the alternative? Others of the natives of that kingdom, too much attached to their religious profession to abandon it on any consideration, yet much too ardent for their country to relinquish the satisfaction of engaging in her service, are at this very hour exposed to the penalties of the law: exclusion from the right of receiving a legacy; exclusion from the right of acting as the guardian of a child; exclusion from the right of suing in any court, or on any occasion for justice.

“Am I asked how often of late years has the law been enforced? My answer is, the lethargy of the law gives no security to the subject; for an hungry informer may at any time rouse it to exertion, and direct it to its prey. But though the fierceness of the statute should not be called into action, yet in the insult which is offered to the Scots, in the dishonor of being placed on the same level

with men whose claim to confidence is blasted by the crime of perjury established in proof against them,—in that dishonor, in that insult, there is no intermission, there is no pause. It is time, that these odious distinctions—these hateful signs of difference between the two countries which compose Great Britain, should entirely be done away: that every scar and seam, which marks the lips of her ancient wound, should disappear for ever; and that her offspring should have leave to consider themselves as one nation, and one people.

“ Nothing now remains, but that I should briefly mention the hardships imposed by the Test act on the ministers of the established church—a class of our fellow-subjects to whose concerns the members of this House cannot be indifferent. The law which declares that every man, who accepts a commission in the army, or is appointed to a civil office, shall take the sacrament of the Lord's supper, compels the clergyman to administer this sacrament to every person who shall demand it upon that ground; for, if he refuses, a ruinous prosecution for damages is the obvious and inevitable consequence. The very expense of the trial would probably exhaust his means, and leave him nothing but his body to answer by imprisonment the adverse judgment of the court. Since then the law, by menaces too terrible to be resisted, compels him to administer the holy sacrament to every man who shall demand it, as a qualification for an office; in what manner must he proceed? Shall he give the invitation in the usual words of the service, ‘ All you that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take his holy sacrament to your comfort.’ Considering the motives which bring them to the holy table, such an address might be deemed an insult to their feel-

ings. Or shall he tell them, with a better chance of speaking in unison with their thoughts, 'all you that are lately appointed to offices under his Majesty, that do truly and earnestly desire your continuance therein, and are in love with the profits thereof, you that are lately become Excise-officers, or Custom-House officers, or Salt-officers, or Officers of the Stamps, and have a charitable hope of enriching yourselves with the spoils of the illicit trader, draw near in faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, that you may have a legal title to your places.'

"By the duties of his function, by the positive precepts of his religion, the minister is enjoined to warn from the sacred table all blasphemers of God, all slanderers of his word, all adulterers, and all persons of a profligate life; yet to those very persons, if they demand it as a qualification, he is compelled by the Test act to administer the sacrament, though they come to him drunk from the protracted revels of the night, or warm from the neighbouring stews. And what is the nature of the sacrament, which the clergyman is thus compelled to administer? One sentence, one single sentence from the service of our church, with the permission of the House, I will beg leave to read. After having exhorted the persons, who are perparing to communicate, 'diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup,' it thus proceeds, 'For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us,) so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily; for then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body: We kindle God's wrath against us; we

provoke him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death.

“ Sir, if there be any thing serious in religion ; if the doctrines of the church of England be not a mere mockery of the human understanding ; if to talk of peace of mind here, and of eternal consequences hereafter, be not the idle babbling of a weak and childish superstition, (and I trust that in the judgment of those who hear me, it will be admitted to be something more,) then it will necessarily follow, that no pretexts of state policy can justify this enormous profanation of the most sacred ordinance of the Christian faith, this monstrous attempt, as irrational as it is profane, to strengthen the church of England by the debasement of the church of Christ.

“ Shall I be told that the law, which enjoins the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, is not more an insult to the Christian faith, than the law which enjoins an oath ? A weak, and inconsiderate assertion ! In what respect is an oath, an ordinance of the Christian faith ? Do not the Mahometan, the Jew, the Deist, and the Idolatër equally swear ? It is not an ordinance of religion, it promotes none of her interests, is applicable to none of her purposes ; for the object of an oath is merely civil : it is a human institution, and is applicable only to concerns that are merely temporal. I have heard it said, that the law does not compel the clergyman to administer the sacrament to the unworthy—Sir, the terror of the suit for damages, the mere expense of which, independently of the final issue, would be ruin, is itself compulsion. But suppose the reverse to be true, and suppose also that the time at which I am now speaking were a time of war—our fleet is preparing to sail ; the enemy’s fleet is already in the channel ; the officer appointed as our Admiral is a man of the highest professional merit, and is called to the command by the general voice of the people. Debauched, however, in his private life, living in avowed fornication, and

notoriously profane, he approaches the holy table ; if the sacrament be administered to him, in what situation is the clergyman ? If it be refused him, in what situation is the kingdom ?

“ Such are the preposterous consequences that follow, when religion is perverted from its genuine object, and made the instrument of purposes that are merely human.

“ I should have thought it not unbecoming in the bishops to have solicited the removal of this scandal from the church ; but let the requisition come from what quarter it may, sure I am, that as legislators, a compliance with it belongs to us as our duty ; for whatever tends to the debasement of religion, diminishes political authority, and weakens the sanctions of civil discipline.

“ Thus I have shewn the various bearings of these pernicious statutes. To the judgment of the House, to your wisdom, as senators, to your patriotism as citizens, to your feelings as men, I now submit the consideration of the proposed repeal, perfectly convinced that you will not permit the continuance of laws unjust in their principle, unwise in their political effects, inconsistent with all religious regards, and therefore every way hostile to the interests of the state.”

Lord NORTH made the following reply :

“ If the present motion went no farther than for the fair and free exercise of the rights of conscience, I should be the last man upon earth to deliver an opinion against it ; but my motive for rising is to act the part of a good citizen, and not to lay an heavy burthen upon the conscience of any individual whatsoever.

“ I have heard reports, that the Dissenters wish to gain *more than civil* privileges ; but as this suggestion has been contradicted by the two honorable members who have spoke upon the subject, my doubts on that point are done away, and I can give every belief to the assertions of these honorable gentlemen. I should have been glad if

the Dissenters had proceeded in a more regular manner, and stated the grievances under which they labor, by petition to the House. Yet I am not insensible that great and liberal minds should shew a virtuous eagerness to relieve unasked,—to anticipate the wishes of fellow-subjects,—and that when a natural way to act thus laudably is known, it ought undoubtedly to be always adopted. The doors of this House stand open to all petitioners ; and, if a petition had been delivered, stating their grievances, I doubt not but the justice of the House would have redressed them, if they really proved so troublesome in their nature—They have, however chosen to adopt another mode of bringing their case before the House ; and they seem rather to depend upon the weight and abilities of the honorable mover, and seconder of the motion, than on the justice of their cause.—But I wish, before the House resolve on a vote, to see on what grounds the motion stands.

“ It prays for the repeal of an act which is the great bulwark of the constitution, and to which we owe those inestimable blessings of freedom which we now so happily enjoy. It recommends procedures contrary to the experience of a century. The Dissenters appear desirous of having such and such privileges granted to them, and a line drawn which they are not to exceed : that line (I am glad to say) is already drawn ; and, concerning what relates to the worship of God in their own way, they have no grievance to state ; but their entreaty is to have the restriction from being able to fill offices taken off. In the year 1778 a finishing stroke was put to restrictions ; a general toleration was then granted. If there remains any thing which can operate as a burthen on any man’s conscience, in the name of Heaven, let it be done away ; but let not the admitting of persons of particular persuasions into the offices of state be confounded with the restriction of conscience. If this government finds it prudent and

necessary to confine the admission to public offices to men of particular principles, it has a right to adhere to such restriction ; it is a privilege belonging to all states : and all have exercised it—all do exercise it—and will continue to exercise it. If Dissenters claim it as their undoubted, their natural right, to be rendered capable of enjoying offices, and that plea be admitted, the argument may be admitted to all men. The vote of a freeholder for a representative to parliament is confined to those who possess a freehold of forty shillings or upwards ; and those, not possessing that qualification, may call it an usurpation of their natural right, by preventing them from voting also.

“ We are told that other countries have no Test acts, and that their established churches are not endangered for the want thereof. *France* has Protestants at the head of her army and her finances ; and *Prussia* employs Catholics in her service ; but it must be considered, that those are arbitrary governments ; that the King alone in those countries is to be served, and can, at pleasure, remove or advance, whom he pleases. The King of England, being a limited monarch, can do no such thing ; he is bound by those restrictive laws, as much as his subject. *Holland* admits of men of all religions into her army, because not having subjects enough of her own, she is obliged to have recourse to foreign troops ; but there is no place where they restrain their civil offices more to the established principles of the country. The same may be said of *Sweden*. It has been urged, that by the Corporation and Test acts, any man, who refuses to submit thereto, is subject to the same punishment with those who may be convicted of great and heinous crimes ; but that is not the fact ; no man, because he does not choose to receive the sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, is subjected to any punishment whatever. The act holds out punishment to those who fill offices ; and they are punished for wilfully flying in the face of an act of the legislature. If the act went to

force every other man to take the sacrament, or inflict a penalty upon him, it would indeed be a grievance ; and I would most readily concur in having it repealed.

“ Have not the country resolved that no King or Queen should sit on the throne of the British Empire, who refuses to comply with the Test act ? If the throne was offered to any Prince who would not comply, from motives of conscience, the refusal of the throne to him would be offering him no indignity,—no insult. Gentlemen, then, should not lightly talk of insults and stigmas thrown on any set of men who do not choose to comply with any particular forms. If all were to be admitted, on the principles of national right, there would be an end to all rules and orders ; for no rules could be drawn by the legislature, but what would be broken through. The Corporation act was made at a time when many disturbances were occasioned by the Dissenters, who were principally instrumental in all the consequences that followed. All who then wished for peace, and for the preservation of the constitution, in church and state, called for the measure which was then taken, and which I now consider as a wise and political measure ; it was and is necessary to confine offices in corporations to those who are well-wishers to the established church. We are called upon by an honorable gentleman to proceed as France has done ; but I would rather proceed according to the experience of England, which has enjoyed peace and harmony in the church by those acts. It has been said, that when the Test act was made, the King himself was suspected of being a Catholic ; and the presumptive heir had openly avowed himself a Catholic ; that it was not meant to act against the Dissenters, but against the Papists ; but I will venture to say, that the parliament who passed it, knew how far it extended ; they knew that it included both ; and when the parliament passed both those acts, they knew both Papists and Dissenters were included. CHARLES the Second, we

are told, prevented by dishonorable means, the repeal of those acts; he thought that the repeal was wisely and patriotically refused. It has been the general means of Princes, who had particular objects to attain, which they could not do while every sect remained as it was, to endeavor to confound all sects, that when the door of innovation was once opened, they might pass on till their object was gained. What was the opinion of parliament at the Revolution? That parliament was sharpened by the miseries they had experienced, and by the horror of danger; they deliberately went through all the acts, and repealed every one except the Test act, which they considered as a mere civil and political regulation; they preserved it, and they thought it necessary for the safety of the church, and the preservation of the constitution. By that parliament a just line was drawn, to the relief of conscience, on the one hand, and for the safety of the church, on the other. The Test act was the corner-stone of the constitution, which should have every preservation. King JAMES, when he wished to gain the Prince and Princess of ORANGE to his views, desired to have their opinion on the propriety of repealing the Test and Corporation acts. The answer of the Prince of ORANGE was, that he agreed to the removal of the Corporation act, but not of the Test act; and he declared it to be the practice of Holland to confine all civil employments to those who professed the principles of the state; but that the army could not be so restrained, on account of the want of troops. Nothing brought JAMES so speedily to the crisis of his fate as the Test act, which restrained him, and rendered it impossible for him to fill all offices civil and military with those of his own sect; which he hoped to be enabled to do by gaining the repeal of the Test act; and then there would have been an end to all liberty. Tyranny would have stolen silently on, until it had been so deeply rooted, as to render all endeavors against it vain.

“ I conceive it to be the duty of every member of this House to prevent that which may, in a future period, subject the nation to the same dangers which it has before experienced. If the Scots had any hardships, if they had any grievances, they would have been ready enough to have laid complaints before the House ; and there are many gentlemen of that country in the House, who would be ready enough to state those complaints to the House, if any existed. The Union with Scotland I look upon as a most sacred compact, and which ought not to be touched with a rash hand. The church is established on a sacred basis, and those who wish for no innovation on the Union should guard against any attacks on the church. With respect to the clergy of the church being *forced* to give the sacrament to all who desire it ; that so far from its being the wish of the clergy of England to gain a repeal of the Test act, they are all alarmed at the intention of proposing the repeal, and are determined to resist it with their greatest strength. Every minister is bound, by his holy office to refuse the communion to any unworthy person. If he refuses according to law, by law he will be justified : the fear of an action should not prevent a man from doing his duty : if he is right, where can be the fear of an action ? He will gain honor, and the person bringing the action will have a considerable expense and dishonor. The clergy are situated now in the same manner that they were before the Test act ; they could then, and they may now, upon proof, refuse the administering the holy sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* to an unworthy or bad character. The sacrament is administered as a test of being well affected to the church. Some test is necessary, and must be taken. If the sacrament, in many instances, is taken unworthily, I fear that many false oaths are taken ; and can that operate as a reason for the abolition of oaths, which in many cases are absolutely necessary ? The legislature is not to be answerable for the con-

sequences of the sacrament being taken unworthily, or for false oaths; and if any other test could be devised to answer the same purposes, I would willingly adopt it. If the plea of birth-right is argued, on that ground may Catholics also claim admission. It hath been contended, that times have changed; that then a Papist was on the throne. Yes, thanks to heaven! they are changed; but may not they be changed again? It may be said, that now there is no danger of *Jacobitism*: the family is reduced to two brothers, one of whom, being in priest's orders, can have no legitimate offspring, and the other is very old. But there may be danger in breaking down the barrier which has hitherto guarded the constitution. We all know the perilous nature of a cry, *the church is in danger*, and an incendiary, watching his opportunity, may cause as great a tumult, and as much mischief by that cry, as by the cry of *No Popery*! Though we owe much to the *Brunswick line*, for the blessings of that liberty which we enjoy, much is also owing to the church for its promotion of harmony, by its submission to the government, and its liberal principles—principles which have encouraged the bringing forward the present motion. We find no complaint of ecclesiastical tyranny, no church persecution; let us not then confound toleration of religious principles with civil and military appointments. Universal toleration is already established: let us be upon our guard against any innovation in the church: the constitution is always in danger, when the church is deprived of its rights.”

Mr. PITT expressed his perfect concurrence in the noble lord's arguments, which were combated by Mr. Fox with his usual eloquence and energy; but the result was the rejection of Mr. BEAUFOY's motion by a majority of 178 to 100.

This, however, did not discourage Mr. BEAUFOY from returning to the charge two years after, [May 8, 1789]

when he observed that the unalterable confidence which the Dissenters still continue to repose in the general disposition of the House to do justice to the injured, and to give relief to the oppressed, had induced them (and they trusted not without that temper, moderation, and respect, by which in all similar proceedings they had been invariably distinguished) to renew their application to parliament. Upon this occasion they were perfectly convinced, how difficult it was even for the best and wisest of men to relinquish, on the evidence of a single debate, the prejudice which misinformation had led them to adopt; neither had they forgotten how frequently the legislature had granted the very requests, which causeless apprehensions had before induced them to refuse. In the present instance, they could not avoid flattering themselves under the most earnest hope, that, whilst their merits as citizens was acknowledged, they might venture, without offence, a second time to solicit from the natural guardians of all descriptions of the people a candid and impartial hearing.

Mr. BEAUFOY begged leave to remind the House, that, in their former application, the Dissenters, far from wishing by a multitude of petitions to display their numbers and political consequence in the state, had placed their whole reliance on a plea to which numbers gave no additional strength; for they knew that to the ear of a British parliament the voice of justice ascends with as much effect from the few as from the many, from the feeble as the strong; that the same temper had marked their subsequent conduct; for however sensibly they felt the hardships of being subjected, though guiltless of offence, to such disabilities and such dishonor as few offences can deserve; yet they had not indulged in the language of complaint, neither had they sought the aid of political alliances, or endeavoured to avail themselves of party divisions. Much more elevated had been their line of con-

duct ; for they had patiently waited the arrival of a period, in which the wisdom of a complete toleration should be generously acknowledged, and in which the experience of other nations should have proved that such a toleration would strengthen the interest of the established church, and so entirely destroy the bitterness of religious variance, that the state would afterwards be as little affected by that variance as by a difference in opinion in natural philosophy, or any other speculative science. For his own part, Mr. BEAUFOY remarked, that whilst he described, with satisfaction, the temperate conduct of the Dissenters, he was perfectly aware that among them, as in all large societies, intemperate individuals might be found ; but to throw upon the Dissenters, the blame resulting from the unauthorized language and unsanctioned asperities of such men, would be as absurd as to expect that in a large multitude no man of a peculiar cast of mind, who measured his opinions by a standard of his own, was not to be found. Such an imputation would prove as unjust, as a charge against the church of England of embracing and practically extending those principles of despotism, those maxims of civil thralldom, which particular clergymen have sometimes inculcated from the pulpit. " Who does not know," said Mr. BEAUFOY, " that the settled maxims and fundamental axioms of the British constitution have been condemned by a higher authority in the church of England, than any which the Dissenters own? Yet what man is either so weak, or so wicked, as therefore to declare, that the church of England is hostile to the laws and constitution of her country? It is only by the tenor of their course, and general spirit of their conduct, that large societies can ever be justly tried and measured, whether as faithful and affectionate supporters of his Majesty's illustrious house ; or as citizens zealously attached to the constitution ; or as Protestants who in doubtful and difficult emergencies have proved themselves friends to

the established church ; the Dissenters will be found on a level with the most distinguished of their fellow-subjects."

Having observed with what pleasure he perceived that, in consequence of the last debate on the subject, many points, on which he had then thought it his duty to enlarge, might now be taken for granted, as known and admitted truths, Mr. BEAUFOY added, that he should think it superfluous to prove that the grievance, from which the Dissenters solicited relief, was a civil, and not a religious oppression ; that they complained not of ecclesiastical hardships, but of being injured as citizens, of being wronged as Englishmen ; and that all they asked was a restoration of civil rights, and permission to give proofs to the world that no men regard danger less, or value their country more. He should think it equally superfluous to shew, that the exclusion of the Dissenters from civil and military offices was not the reason for which the Test act was originally passed ; for all who had consulted the Journals, or even the common histories on the subject, must know, that the assembling an army under Catholic officers, for the purpose of overawing the proceedings of parliament, and the stationing that army within an hour's march of the capital, was the circumstance which gave rise to the statute. The sacramental clause in the Corporation act was intended in like manner against the Catholics alone ; for as the other provisions of the statute, by dispossessing the enemies of the court, had established the influence of the crown in all the corporations of the kingdom, the parliament was naturally apprehensive, that, in the next reign, under a Catholic king, all corporation offices would be filled with Catholics. It was obvious that the clause, which enacted the sacramental test, could not be intended against the Dissenters, as at that time there existed no such description of people ; for as the act of uniformity, which produced the separation, was not

passed till a subsequent period, those who were afterwards called Dissenters were then within the inclosure of the church, and consequently participated in her sacraments. The provision must, therefore, have been intended as a guard against the Catholics, to whom it effectually applied, and not as a guard against those who were afterwards called Dissenters, on whom at that period it could not operate. Yet, though the exclusion of the Catholics from civil and military employments was the object for which the Test and Corporation acts were passed, the continuance of these acts with that view was altogether useless; for if the exclusion of the Catholics from the offices of executive government was still thought expedient to the state, that exclusion might be effectually obtained by the same oath of supremacy, and by the same declaration against the leading article of their faith, which debarred them from a seat in either House of parliament. As to the sufficiency of the oath of abjuration to exclude from military and civil employments all persons of a different faith from a Christian, as every man who takes that oath swears that he takes it on the faith of a Christian; this he should conceive was too generally known to stand in need of any argument.

After this exordium, Mr. BEAUFOY entered upon a specific statement of the Dissenters' case, which he described as involving in it two different questions: 1st. Have the Dissenters a right in common with their fellow-subjects to the usual privileges and general benefits of citizenship? 2dly, If they have a right, what benefits does their exclusion from the enjoyment of it produce to the church, or state? If the first of these questions were proposed to the consideration of a foreigner, he would naturally ask, what are these Dissenters that their right to the common privileges of citizens should be disputed? Are they slaves to the rest of the community; or are they offenders who have forfeited their privileges by their

crimes ; or are they persons who from their religious tenets are unable, or from disaffection to the state are unwilling, to give the necessary pledges of obedience ? Not as slaves to the rest of the community, do we deny them the usual privileges of citizens ; for thanks to the spirit of our ancestors, there is in Great Britain no such description of men. Not as criminals do we exclude them from the enjoyment of their rights ; for of the millions of subjects who inhabit the kingdom, there are none of more untainted integrity, or of more unquestionable honor. Neither as persons who are unable, or unwilling to give a sufficient pledge of their obedience to the state, do we reject them ; for such is the satisfaction which we feel in the pledges they give of their attachment,—such is our reliance upon the oaths which they are at all times willing to take, that without hesitation or reserve we admit them to the highest of all trusts, that of legislative power ; but the ground, on which we do refuse them the rights and privileges which their fellow-citizens enjoy, is their presuming to believe, that in those concerns of religion which relate not to actions but opinions, it is every man's duty, as it is every man's right, to follow the dictates of his own understanding. To be convinced by the evidence of another man's judgment, in opposition to the evidence of their own, they conceive to be as impossible as to credit the testimony of another man's sight in opposition to the evidence of their own eyes. It is this adherence to a necessary conclusion from self-evident premises ; it is this attachment to an unavoidable inference from axioms which no man living disputes ; it is this uniform regard for the right of private judgment in matters of religion, which, in the contemplation of the law, outweighs all sense of their virtues as men, all esteem of their patriotism as citizens, all respect for their loyalty as subjects ; it is this which has induced us to impose on them civil disabilities, without the commission of any offence. It is

this which has impelled us to subject them, as far as the law can subject them, to the same disabilities, the same dishonor, with those who have been publicly convicted of wilful, corrupt, and deliberate perjury. Because you will not consent to be hypocrites, therefore, say the laws, you shall be treated as if you were perjured. No office under the crown, though your sovereign may invite you to his service ; no commission in the army, though the enemy may be marching to the capital ; no share in the management of any of the commercial companies of the kingdom, though your whole fortunes may be vested in their stocks, shall be yours : from the direction of the Bank of England, from the direction of the East India Company, from that of Russia, the Turkish and South Sea companies, you are entirely debarred ; for if you should accept of any share in the management of these Companies, or of any office under the crown, or of any military employment, you are within the penalties of the statutes. In the first place, you forfeit to the informer the sum of 500*l*. if you cannot pay that sum without delay, the penalty is imprisonment ; if you cannot pay it at all, as may be the case with many a brave officer, who has offended against the law by fighting the battles of his country, the penalty is imprisonment for life. In the next place, you are incapable of suing for any debt. Does any one owe you money ? Have you entrusted him with your whole fortune ? It is in his power to cancel that debt, by annulling your means of recovering it ; and for that act of dishonesty, of consummate fraud, of treachery in the extreme, the parliament assigns him a reward of 500*l*. to be bequeathed from the wreck of your fortune. In the next place, the law denies you its protection : for the wrongs which he has done you, and for the insults and the injuries, however atrocious, which you have experienced from him, you shall have no redress : to the complaints of others against you the ear of the magistrate is

open ; but to your supplications, to your prayers, to your complaints, it is from this time forward inexorably shut. You are condemned to wretchedness and beggary for life. In the next place, you are incapable of receiving any legacy ; the inheritance bequeathed by your parents you cannot take ; your rights as sons are cancelled. In the last place, you are also incapable of being guardian to any child, even to your own. A former penalty annihilated your right as a child ; this abrogates your privileges as a parent. Such are the strong coercions by which the Dissenters are excluded from the enjoyment, not only of their most valuable privileges as citizens, but of rights which they hold by a higher title, and claim by a superior authority to any which civil governments bestow. How hard, then, is the situation of a Dissenter ? If he should disobey the laws, which exclude him from civil and military employments, and should accept of any office to which the choice of his sovereign, or the confidence of his fellow-citizens may invite him, he is robbed of his fortune, stripped of his inheritance, deprived of his personal security, and bereaved of his privileges which result from a natural relation of a father to his child ! If, on the other hand, he should acquiesce in the law, and pursue no employments in the army, in the state, or in the commercial companies of the kingdom, he submits to the same disability, and acquiesces in the same degradation which belongs to those who are convicted of wilful, corrupt, and deliberate perjury ; he is loaded with the same punishments which are inflicted on those who have trampled on the first principles of religion, broken down the strongest fences of civil government, and violated the most solemn obligations of human society. Such disabilities, so imposed, are naked and undissembled wrongs ; and, inflicted for religious opinions, nearly constitute persecution ; for what is persecution, but injuries inflicted for religious belief ? It is its true definition, its just and accurate description. What then are the consequences

which follow from these melancholy facts? Injurious, and perhaps unexpected as the conclusion is, we are compelled, by the evidence of truths which we cannot dispute, to acknowledge that the pretended toleration of the Dissenters is a real persecution—a persecution which deprives them of a part of their civil rights, and which, with the same justice, and on the same plea, might equally deprive them of the rest—a persecution which denies them the management of their property, and which, with the same justice, and on the same plea, might equally take from them the property itself—a persecution which deprives them of the right of defending their liberties and lives, and which, with the same justice, and precisely on the same plea, might equally deprive them both of liberty and life. If one degree of persecution may be justified, another degree of it, under different circumstances, may be justified also. Let but the principle be once admitted, and the Inquisition of Portugal and Spain cease to be objects either of ridicule, or of abhorrence.

In answer to the second question, whether any advantage could accrue to the church or state from refusing to the Dissenters the common privileges of citizens, Mr. BEAUFOY remarked, that those who contend that the Test and Corporation laws are essential to the safety of the church of England, must mean that these laws are a protection to the tythes and other revenues which belong to the establishment, and to the offices and honors which constitute her hierarchy. The question consequently is, would the Dissenters, if the Test and Corporation acts were repealed, have either the disposition or the power to deprive the church of her revenues, or her dignities? That they would not have the disposition, he could prove from their conduct in the reign of JAMES the Second, when they chose to share her hazard, rather than desert her interests—from their present conduct in Ireland, where the church acknowledges that she owes her safety to their

attachment. The good-will of the Dissenters towards the revenue of the church is ensured (and if the statutes in question were repealed, would still be ensured) by particular circumstances. The circumstances were, that the Dissenters, generally speaking, (for there were undoubtedly many exceptions) belonged not to the landed interest of the kingdom, which bears the principal burthen of the tythes, but to the commercial interest, on which the weight is comparatively light. The voluntary subscriptions of the Dissenters to maintain their own clergy were too light to be felt as a burden, and in their destination and use they were constantly regarded as a privilege. The several denominations of the Dissenters differed as much from each other, as from the established church; and they were so far from being hostile to its ministers, that he believed the clergy themselves would acknowledge, that of the voluntary contributions which they received from their parishioners, those of the Dissenters were in general the highest and most liberal.

From these remarks on the dispositions of the Dissenters, Mr. BEAUFOY passed on to the consideration of the additional power which would be given them by the repeal of the statutes in question. To such classes of the Dissenters as are not able to give a sufficient pledge of their civil obedience, it would be no acquisition. The Quakers, who undoubtedly were enemies, from principle, to the revenues of the church, would still be excluded from the offices of executive government, by their refusing to take the oath of allegiance. The Catholics also would still be excluded by their refusal to take the oath of supremacy. He did not mention the Methodists, because, unless the utmost ardour of devotion, and the strongest attachment to the doctrines of the church could be called differing from the church, he knew not on what ground they could be considered as Dissenters. The only persons who could derive an advantage from the proposed repeal would be the

Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists. This advantage would consist of nothing more than the liberty to serve the sovereign, when he should call upon them for the aid of their integrity and their talents ; the liberty to serve their fellow subjects, when they should elect them to offices of trust ; and the liberty of hazarding their lives in defence of their native land. What possible injury would result to the church from the restoration of rights in themselves so clear and indisputed ? With respect to the safety of the church, it did not depend on those who fill the subordinate offices of executive government, but upon the legislature alone ; and, in the legislature, no possible alteration could be made by the repeal ; for neither the Lords nor the Commons are required to take the sacramental test, nor are those by whom the Commons are elected, in that way to qualify themselves for voting. One only objection had reached him, and this was, that if the Dissenters were gratified in their present request, new requisitions of less justice might follow. But was it possible that the legislature could be so forgetful of its own firmness, as to say to any part of the people, ‘ That which you justly ask we are afraid to grant, lest you should afterwards solicit more than you have a pretence to claim.’

What individual in private life, of common integrity, and of common fortitude, ever refused the payment of a just debt, lest he should afterwards be asked for money which he did not owe ? But what farther requisitions could the Dissenters make ? No grievance would be left, no oppression would remain. The three classes of Dissenters would have no bond of union ; no common object of pursuit. The dissenting interest would soon dissolve away, at the removal of the persecution which gives it strength and compactness, and the established church would acquire of course additional stability and power.

Proceeding next to consider the effect of the repeal on the interests of the state, Mr. BEAUFORT asked, what on

this subject were the sentiments of King WILLIAM the Third? With respect to the sentiments of the first of his Majesty's illustrious house, who wore the crown of Great Britain, we fortunately know their nature; because the Journals have told us how much they lamented that so many of their loyal and affectionate subjects should be excluded from their service. But the language of things is still stronger than that of these illustrious men; for who can reflect without indignation that so large a proportion of the most deserving citizens are excluded by law from the privilege of engaging in the defence of their country, their freedom, and their lives? Does the voice of a sovereign in a fearful and perilous season, call the Dissenters to his service, or does the strong impulse of affection for their native land urge them to oppose their strength to the invading enemy, and to shew him that his sword must pass through their breast, before it can reach that of their country? Presumptuous men! what shall be your fate? From this time forward you shall be treated as outcasts from the community! The law shall with-hold from you the guards with which it protects the personal security of the subject; and even the rights of inheritance shall be taken from you. Do you complain that, guiltless of any offence, except the offence of having bled for your country, you are subjected to penalties so severe? It is but the lightest part of your punishment; a higher scourge remains. It is on your feelings as parents that the law shall inflict its deepest wound. Tainted in the eyes of your offspring as unfit to be trusted with the care of their education, or the superintendence of their morals, your natural affection shall be made the instrument of your severest anguish. O most incomparable system of ingenious cruelty! A considerable part of the best subjects of the kingdom cannot indulge their attachment to their native land but at the expense of their attachment to their offspring. The passion of the father for his child is op-

posed to his passion for the country. The barbarian, of whom we read in the papers on your table, that African tyrant who has carried the science of despotism to a perfection which NERO never knew, even he aspires at nothing more than to destroy the family attachment, and to annihilate the parental feeling. He does not attempt to oppose the attachment of the father to the duty of the citizen ; but the British law is founded in deeper cruelty. Its object is to create a war of attachments, and to establish a conflict of passions. It is to make virtue inconsistent with virtue, duty irreconcilable to duty, affection incompatible with affection. Can such laws be consistent with the interests of the state ? When the kingdom, a few years since, was assailed by the adherents to another claimant of the crown ; when the faith of a large proportion of people was dubious ; when the loyalty of many of those who were near the person of the king was thought to be tainted, and terror had palsied even more than corruption had seduced, what was then the conduct of the Protestant Dissenters of England ? To say, that of the multitudes which composed that varied society there was not one man, not a single individual, who joined the enemy of his Majesty's house, (unexampled as this proof of their loyalty was) is, however, but to speak the smallest part of their praise ; for at the very time when the armies of the state had been repeatedly discomfited ; at the very time that those who reached at his Majesty's crown were actually in possession of the center of the kingdom ; at the very time when Britain, unable to rely on her native strength, and hourly trembling for her safety, had recourse to foreign aid ; at that very time, the Dissenters, regardless of the dreadful penalties of the law, and anxious for their country alone, eagerly took up arms. And what was the return which they received ? As soon as the danger was passed by, they were compelled to solicit protection of that general mercy which was

extended to the very rebels against whom they fought ; they were obliged to shelter themselves under that act of grace which was granted to the very traitors, from whose arms they had defended the crown, and the life of the sovereign. It was thus only that they escaped those dreadful penalties which they incurred by their loyalty, and which the irritated friends of the rebellion were impatient to bring down upon them. To the disgrace of our statutes, to the dishonor of the British name, to the reproach of humanity, these persecuting statutes are still unrepealed. " Perhaps," added Mr. BEAUFOY, " I shall be told, that, however oppressive in speculation their injustice may be thought, instances of their active oppression has seldom been experienced ; because, notwithstanding the frequency of trespasses upon their enactments, informations against these trespassers have seldom been exhibited. Can such a defence be urged in behalf of the statutes of a British parliament ? What is it but to say, that so flagrant is the injustice, so unqualified the oppression, so hostile to every feeling of humanity is the language of those statutes, that the most depraved informer, the most inveterate practiser on the fortunes and lives of his fellow-subjects, will not take upon himself the odium of their execution ? Rather than accept the enormous bribe by which the legislature invites him to ruin the fortune of innocent and deserving citizens ; rather than accept the enormous wealth with the view of which the legislature tempts him to bring down upon the best of men punishments due only to the worst ; rather than cancel that great bond of nature which unites the parent to his offspring ; the ruffian who is in want of bread, resolves, at the hazard of his life, to seek it on the high way ; for the deed to which the legislature would urge him exceeds the measure of his depravity ! Shall we then consider these statutes as harmless, because they are too wicked for execution ? Can this be accepted as a sufficient assur-

ance that they will not be made as oppressive in their use as they are ferocious in their intent? It is too frail a reliance; it is too infirm a security. If there be persons (and I know there are many who have borne commissions in the army without the sacramental qualification) if there be any who have taken a part in the bank of England, the East India Company, or any of the other chartered companies of the kingdom, or if there be any in the present or in the late administration who have accepted offices of trust without this legal requisite of the Lord's supper, let me," Mr. BEAUFOY said, "entreat them to recollect to what terrible penalties they are at this very hour exposed, and whether they be Dissenters, or members of the church of Scotland, or persons who for any reason are willing to mix the sacred ordinances of religion with their temporal pursuits, then let me entreat them also to consider, that it is likewise in the power of every man to grapple with their peace; that it is in the power of every man, whom avarice, animosity, or private revenge may prompt to deeds of ill; that it is in the power of every one, who has an interest to serve, or a passion to gratify, at once to bring down such ruin on their heads, as would make them objects of compassion to the poorest and meanest of their fellow-subjects.

"As yet," continued Mr. BEAUFOY, "I have spoken as an advocate for a numerous description of my fellow-subjects, whose moral virtues I esteem, whose patriotism I revere, whose situation, as much injured men, has strongly attached me to their cause, but to whose religious persuasion I myself do not belong. Permit me now, for a few moments, before I conclude, to speak of interests, in which I have a more immediate and personal concern, the interest of the church of England. From all testimonies, ancient and modern, I have ever understood, that the worst practice of which a legislature can be guilty, is that of employing the laws of a country

to degrade and make contemptible the religion of the country. For what man is so little acquainted with the motives of the human heart, or knows so little of the history of nations, as not to be aware, that in proportion as he weakens in the people their respect for religion, he corrupts their manners, and in proportion as he corrupts their manners, he renders all laws ineffectual. Now, of all the solemn rites and sacred ordinances of her faith, there is not one so guarded round with terrors, and over which the avenging sword of the Almighty appears so distinctly to the view, as the ordinance of the holy sacrament; for, 'he who presumes to eat of that bread, and to drink of that cup unworthily, eateth, and drinketh his own damnation; he is guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and provokes the Almighty to plague him with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death.' That these terrible denunciations may not be lightly and unthinkingly incurred, the minister is directed, when he stands at the holy altar, to prohibit the approach of all persons of abandoned morals and of a profligate life. Such are the injunctions of his religion; but the law tells him, that to those very persons, abandoned and profligate as they are, if by any means they have found their way to office, he must administer the sacrament. Is he informed, that the man, who demands it, is covered with crimes; a smuggler perhaps (for such appointments have been at no time unfrequent) who has obtained his employment as a reward for having betrayed his associates, and for having added private treachery to a long course of public fraud? Is he also told, that this man, new as he is to office, is already supposed to have violated his oath, and that the weight of accumulated perjury is already on his head? Still however the clergyman must comply with his demand; for perjured as he is, the Test act has given him a legal right to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Should the minister refuse, the expense of a ruinous suit would devour

his scanty means, and consign him for life to a prison. Thus circumstanced, the minister has no choice ; yet he cannot but know that in taking it unworthily he eats, and drinks his own damnation ! Such is the task which the Test act has assigned to these very men, whose particular duty it is to guard their fellow-subjects from perdition, and to guide them in their road to happiness. If in the records of human extravagance, or of human guilt, there can be found a law more presumptuous than this, I will give up the cause. And to what purpose is this debasement of religion ? If it be thought requisite that Dissenters be excluded from the common privileges of citizens, why must the sacrament be made the instrument of the wrong ? Why must the purity of the temple be polluted ? Why must the sanctity of the altar be defiled ? Why must the most sacred ordinance of her faith be exposed to such gross, such unnecessary prostitution ? If there be persons who are too little attached to the theory of the Christian faith, to be shocked at the impiety, they must at least be astonished at the folly of such a conduct. For who does not see, that in proportion as we degrade the sanctity of religion, we diminish our own power, and unnerve the arm of the legislature ? If the House has faith, as I trust and confidently believe they have, in the religion of their country (and if they have not, God knows that the worst calamity which can befall Great Britain would be the revealing this secret to the people) is it possible they can permit an ordinance, so entirely abstracted from all temporal pursuits, to be condemned to the drudgery of the meanest of human interests, to be subjected to the polluted steps of the lowest avarice and of the most despicable ambition ; to be dragged into the service of every insignificant stipend and of every contemptible office ; and, as if with a view to its utter debasement in the minds of the people, to be made a qualification for inspecting the loath-

some receptacles of every thing hateful to be named, which is cast forth from the city.

“ The Saviour of the world instituted the Eucharist in commemoration of his death, an event so tremendous that nature afflicted hid herself in darkness ; but the British legislature has made it a qualification for guaging beer-barrels and soap-boilers’ tubs ; for writing Custom-house cockets and debentures, and for seizing smuggled tea ! The mind is oppressed with ideas so mis-shapen and monstrous ! Sacrilege, hateful as it always is, never before assumed an appearance so hideous and deformed. Endeavours have been often used to justify the legal establishment of this impious profanation, by comparing it with those provisions of our law, which enjoined the sanction of an oath : but the argument equally insults the integrity and understanding of every man to whom it is addressed ; for though it be, indeed, true, that the legislature by compelling every petty officer of the revenue, and every collector of a turnpike toll, to swear deeply on his admission into office, and has made the crime of perjury more frequent than it ever before was in any age or country, yet how does the frequent commission of this crime against law justify the establishment of a religious profanation by law ? But without commenting on the folly of pleading for a legislative debasement of religion in one way, by shewing that the legislature has contributed to its debasement in another, what resemblance does the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which is merely a religious institution, bear to the ceremony of an oath, which is an institution entirely political ? An oath answers none of the purposes of religion : it neither promotes any of her interests, nor forms any part of her establishment. It belongs to the Jew, the Mahometan, and the idolator of every description, as much as it belongs to the Christian ; but such are the arguments by which the Test and Corporation acts have ever been defended.”

In conclusion, Mr. BEAUFOY said, "to the judgment of the House I shall now leave these persecuting statutes, perfectly convinced that their resolution will be such as the principles of justice, the dictates of religion, and, as connected with these, the interest and honor both of the church and state, shall conspire to recommend."

This renewed application in favor of the Dissenters was again opposed by lord NORTH and Mr. PITT, and again supported by Mr. Fox, who laid it down "as a primary axiom of policy, that no human government had jurisdiction over opinions as such, and more particularly over religious opinions. It had no right to presume that it knew them, and much less to act upon that presumption. When opinions were productive of acts injurious to society, the law knew how and where to apply the remedy. If the reverse of this doctrine were adopted, if the actions of men were to be prejudged from their opinions, it would sow the seeds of everlasting jealousy and distrust; it would give the most unlimited scope to the malignant passions; it would incite each man to divine the opinions of his neighbour, to deduce mischievous consequences from them, and then to prove that he ought to incur disabilities, to be fettered with restrictions, to be harassed with penalties. From this intolerant principle had flowed every species of party-zeal, every system of political persecution, every extravagance of religious hate. It was an irreverent and impious opinion to maintain that the church must depend for support as an engine or ally of the state, and not on the evidence of its doctrines, and the excellency of their moral effects. Moderation and indulgence to other sects were equally conducive to the happiness of mankind, and the safety of the church. Since the æra of the Revolution the church had flourished, because her imaginary fears had been dissipated. She had improved in knowledge and candour, because, instead of being enabled to impose silence on the Dissenters by the strong

hand of power, she had been obliged to hear their arguments; and the community at large had found the happy effects, which a collision of opinions in open and liberal discussion, among men living under the same government, never fails to produce. There were many men not of the establishment, to whose services their country had a claim. Surely a citizen of this description might be permitted without danger or absurdity to say, 'Though I dissent from the church, I am a friend to the constitution; and on religious subjects I am entitled to think and act as I please.' Ought the country to be deprived of the benefit she might derive from the talents of such men, and his Majesty be prevented from dispensing the favors of the crown except to one description of his subjects?

"Mr. Fox declared himself a friend to an establishment of religion in every country, framed agreeably to the sentiments of the majority of its inhabitants. But to invest that establishment with a monopoly of civil and religious privileges was palpably unjust, and remote from the purpose of an establishment, which was no otherwise connected with the state, than as it tended to promote morality and good order among the people. The Test and Corporation acts had subsisted, it was contended, for more than a century. True; but how had they subsisted? By repeated suspensions. For the indemnity bills were, literally speaking, annual acts. Where then would be the impropriety of suspending them for ever by an act of perpetual operation? Let not Great Britain be the last to avail herself of the general improvement of the human understanding. Indulgence to other sects, a candid respect for their opinions, a desire to promote charity and good-will, were the best proofs that any religion could give of its divine origin. To the church of England in particular he would say,

"Tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo."

On a division, the numbers were for the motion 104, against it 124, so that it was lost by 20 voices only.

The last attempt to procure a repeal of the Test and Corporation acts was made on the 2d of March 1790 by Mr. Fox himself, who began with requesting that the act of the 15th of CHARLES the Second for the well governing, and regulating corporations, &c. as well as the act of the 25th of the same reign, for the prevention of danger from Popish recusants, &c. might be severally read by the clerk. Mr. Fox then observed, "that as the question he was about to submit to the consideration of the House that day, had excited such great and general expectation as well in that House, as in the country at large, he held it his indispensable duty to state the reasons which induced him on the present occasion, to move the question, which in two former sessions had been brought forward by another honorable gentleman, and had been so ably argued, and so amply discussed by the House. He was confident, the cause, of which he stood that day the advocate, had better remained in the hands to which it had been entrusted on former occasions: he however, assured the House, that he did not obtrude himself upon those most interested in the success of the motion; nor was he under any particular obligations to the parties who considered themselves aggrieved and oppressed by the acts in question; yet regarding their cause as the cause of liberty and truth, to which he should ever profess the most unalienable attachment, he did not hesitate to stand forward the advocate of civil and religious liberty, even in favor of men, who had on different occasions acted hostile towards him. It afforded him, however, a matter of triumph and exultation to observe, that, though in former times he had not enjoyed much of the confidence of that description of men, who were the object of his motion, yet his vanity was not a little flattered, by the good opinion they must now entertain of him,

whom they had solicited with such importunity to conduct the management of their cause, notwithstanding their former difference of political opinions. The present was the period which demanded of public men a free and candid explanation of their political sentiments. In considering the case of the Dissenters, the first argument which naturally presented itself, was that spirit of intolerance and persecution which dictated the oppressive acts, the present subject of grievance and complaint. He conceived it utterly impossible to view any species of persecution, whether civil or religious, without horror and detestation; and therefore the proceedings of a neighbouring nation, in regard to that part of their constitution were so far, in his opinion, from being a subject of censure, as to merit the esteem and applause of a great people, who were investigating the first principles with a view to secure the rights of men, and were wisely applying them to the abolition of that spirit of persecution and intolerance, which had for a long period disgraced their government. Were we to recur to first principles, and observe the progress of the Christian religion in the first stages of its propagation, we should perceive that no vice, evil, or detriment had ever sprung from toleration. Persecution had always been a fertile source of much evil: perfidy, cruelty, and murder had often been the consequence of intolerant principles. The massacres at Paris, the martyrdom at Smithfield, and the executions of the Inquisition, were among the many horrid and detestable crimes which had at different times originated solely from persecution. To suppose a man wicked, or immoral, merely on account of any difference of religious opinion, was as false as it was absurd; yet this was the original principle of persecution. Morality was thought to be most effectually enforced and propagated, by insisting on a general unity of religious sentiments; the dogmas of men in power were to be substituted in the room of every

other religious opinion, as it might best answer the ends of policy and ambition ; it proceeded entirely on this grand fundamental error, that one man could better judge of the religious opinions of another than the man himself could. Upon this absurd principle, persecution might be consistent ; but in this it resembled madness ; the characteristic of which was, acting consistently upon wrong principles. The doctrines of Christianity might have been expected to possess sufficient influence to counteract this great error ; but the reverse had proved to be the case. Torture and death had been the auxiliaries of persecution—the grand engines used in support of one particular system of religious opinion, to the extermination of every other. Toleration proceeded on direct contrary principles. Its doctrines, he was sorry to say, even in this enlightened age, were but of a modern date in any part of the world. Before the reign of king WILLIAM, it had not a footing in England. The celebrated act of toleration of that reign, notwithstanding the boasted liberality of its principle, was narrow, confined, and incomplete. What was it, but a toleration of thirty-four articles, out of thirty-nine, prescribed as the standard of belief in matters of religion ? Was any tolerated who did not subscribe to the thirty-four articles in question ? No ! Strict and implicit conformity to these was enjoined on accepting any civil employment. Persecution indeed originally might be allowed to proceed on this principle of kindness—to promote an union of religious opinion, and to prevent error in the important matters of Christian belief. But did persecution ever succeed in this truly humane and charitable design ? Never—Toleration, on the other hand, was founded on the broad and liberal basis of reason and philosophy. It consisted in a just diffidence of our own particular opinion, and recommended universal charity and forbearance to the world around us. The true friend of toleration ought never to impute evil inten-

tions to another, whose opinions might, in his apprehensions, be attended with dangerous consequences. The man professing such opinions might not be aware of any evil attached to his principles; and therefore to ascribe to such a person any hostile intention, when his opinions only might be liable to exception, was but the height of illiberality and uncharitableness. Thus much obloquy and unfounded calumny had been used to asperse the character of the Roman Catholics, on account of the supposed tendency of their religious tenets to the commission of murder, treason, and every other species of horrid crimes, from a principle of conscience! What was this, but a base imputation of evil intentions, from the uncharitable opinions entertained of that profession as a sect? He lamented their errors; rejected their opinions, which appeared dangerous; was ready to confide in their good professions; and was willing to appeal to the experience of this enlightened age, if they had not been accused unjustly, and condemned uncharitably. For would any man say, that every duty of morality was not practised in those countries, in which the Roman Catholic religion was established and professed? Would it not be an imputation as palpably false, as it would be illiberal, for any one to utter such a foul, unmerited, and indiscriminate calumny? But this was always the haughty, arrogant, and illiberal language of persecution, which led men to judge uncharitably, and to act with bitter intolerance. Persecution always said, 'I know the consequences of your opinion better than you know them yourselves.' But the language of toleration was always amicable, liberal, and just; it confessed its doubts, and acknowledged its ignorance. It said, 'Though I dislike your opinions, because I think them dangerous, yet, since you profess such opinions, I will not believe you can think such dangerous inferences flow from them which strike my attention so forcibly.' This was truly a just and legitimate mode of

reasoning, always less liable to error, and more adapted to human affairs. When we argued *a posteriori*, judging from the fruit to the tree, from the effect to the cause, we were not so subject to deviate into error and falsehood, as when we pursued the contrary method of argument. Yet persecution had always reasoned from cause to effect, from opinion to action, which proved generally erroneous; while toleration led us invariably to form just conclusions, by judging from actions, and not from opinions. Hence every political and religious test was extremely absurd; and the only test, in his opinion, to be adopted, ought to be a man's actions. He had the most perfect conviction, that Test laws had nothing to do with civil affairs. A view of civil society throughout the world must convince every reasonable person, that speculative opinions in religion had little or no influence upon the moral conduct, without which all religion were vain. Such was the great absurdity of the present Test laws, that a man who favoured arbitrary power in his sentiments; who should consider the abolition of trial by jury as no violation of liberty, nor the invasion of the freedom, and law of parliament any infraction of the constitution; yet such a man, in defiance of the present Test laws, might easily pave his way to the very first situations in the state. There was no political test to bind him; the custom of the country had deservedly exploded such absurd restraints. No alarm was excited by political speculations; the law considered no man's opinions either hostile or injurious to the state, until such opinions were reduced into action. Then, and then only, was the law armed with competent authority to punish the offender. Should it be argued, that certain religious opinions might indirectly affect the constitution of the established church, were all sects alike admitted to hold civil employments, without conforming to the Test laws, he should contend, that the constitution was equally in dan-

ger from civil opinions. Every member of parliament was required to declare his dissent to the doctrine of transubstantiation ; but was the speculative opinion of any member of the House any consideration to his constituents ? Did they think it of any consequence whether or not he believed in the real presence ? whether he was a Trinitarian, an Unitarian, or an Anabaptist ? Certainly not. For whatever a man's opinion's might be, he would repeat his former affirmation, that no harm could possibly arise from them to the state, unless they should be brought into action : and then they certainly would become objects of punishment. To exclude any description of men, therefore, from a participation of the common rights which their fellow-citizens enjoyed, was highly unjust and oppressive ; unless it were contended, that religious opinions ought to be taken as the criterion of political principles. But to judge of morals from opinion was always a fallacious mode of reasoning. The House, he trusted, would never abandon general and fundamental principles, on the ground of partiality. They should judge of men not from the imputations of their adversaries, but from their own conduct. The object of the Test laws, at first, had been to exclude anti-monarchical men from civil offices ; but he would even reprobate such a procedure ; it was acting under false pretences ; its tendency led to hypocrisy, and served as a restraint upon the good and conscientious only. Instead of a formal, and direct oath of allegiance, there was an indirect, political test resorted to, by means of a religious test, although the obligation of all direct political tests had been justly exploded by the practice of the country. Why not have proposed a monarchical test at once ? It would have answered the end far more effectually than the present test ; for the test now given went only to guess at a man's opinion ; it might admit those whose political sentiments might be inimical to the constitution, while it operated

directly against others who were amongst its staunchest friends. Such was the absurdity, injustice, and oppression of the present Test laws, that he sincerely hoped every friend of toleration, every advocate of Christian charity, would join with him that day in reprobating measures which were the disgrace of a free government. He should decline all minute detail of the loyalty and good conduct of the Dissenters from the Revolution to the present period, as he wished all merit and demerit to be put entirely out of the question. Supposing, indeed, demerit had existed, it would by no means follow, that the Test laws ought to be continued in force, since they operated to the prejudice of the civil rights of a body of men. A report had been but too successfully propagated, he verily believed, with an intention to separate individuals from the cause they had espoused. It was a mean and unfair attempt; it led to the worst species of persecution; and he sincerely hoped, no real friend to toleration would ever countenance it; for it went so far as to disapprove of a whole body, on account of the conduct of individuals, who formed a part only of that body. The opinions of another, in matters of religion, ought always to be supposed to be founded on good intentions. As unjust would it be to deprive a single individual whose conduct had always been meritorious, of any of his civil rights, on account of any exceptionable conduct in the general body to which he belonged. All merit, or demerit, therefore, in the body of Dissenters was quite out of the question; and the House had only to decide on general principles. Indisposed, however, as he was, to allow merit or demerit any weight in the discussion of the present question, yet he could not forbear observing, that the conduct of the Dissenters had not only been unexceptionable, but also highly meritorious. They had deserved well of their country. When plots had been concerted, combinations formed, and insurrections raised against the state;

when the whole country was in a state of alarm, distraction, and trouble ; when the constitution, both civil and ecclesiastical, was in immediate danger of subversion ; when the monarch trembled for the safety of his throne, crown, and dignity, the Dissenters, instead of being concerned in the dangerous machinations forming against the government, proved themselves, in the hour of peril and emergency, the firmest support of the state. During the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, they cheerfully had exposed their persons, lives, and property, in defence of their king and country ; and by their noble exertions, our enemies were defeated, our constitution preserved, and the Brunswic family continued in possession of the throne. They were then, as they are now, incapacitated from holding commissions, civil or military, in the service of their country. Did they plead their incapacity, or the penalties to which they were subject ? No—they freely drew their swords ; they nobly transgressed the laws which proscribed them ; and successfully fought the battles of our constitution. For this gallant behaviour all they ever obtained was an act of indemnity—a pardon for doing their duty as good citizens, in rescuing their country in the hour of danger and distress. Such were the absurdities of the laws framed on the monstrous principles of persecution, which extend equally to the commissioned officers of the army and navy of the established church of Scotland, who are obliged under the penalty of fine and deprivation of their civil rights as citizens, as much as the Dissenters, to conform to the Test laws. Though the generosity of the British parliament had been conspicuous in pardoning the Dissenters for their illegal display of bravery and loyalty in the season of emergence and apprehension, yet the officers belonging to the church of Scotland had not experienced the same indulgence ; no act of indemnity had been passed in their favor. The Test laws indeed were not put in force against them ; yet they were

liable to penalties and incapacities, in consequence of their acceptance of their respective civil offices. The House ought to relieve those men, to whom they are so much indebted, from the degrading necessity of receiving pardon for their meritorious services as good subjects and citizens. The Irish had set us a noble example of liberality and generosity, by their vote in declaring every man who should prosecute a Dissenter for his services, an enemy to his country, and a *Jacobite*. By the repeal of the Test laws what could there be to dread? Would we fear the Pope, or the Pretender? Would the apprehension of a civil or foreign war be the necessary consequence? King WILLIAM, in one of his speeches from the throne, expressed a wish to employ Dissenters of every denomination in the service of the country. Every Prince of the line of Brunswic had cordially concurred in the same generous desire with that monarch. Now was the properest moment to exercise such liberality as a complete toleration required. The conduct of the Dissenters had been uniformly peaceable: the state had nothing to apprehend either from their disloyalty, or ambition. He wished he could say as much of all other sects. The High Church party, which had happily been dormant for a great number of years, was now reviving; it had not been dead as he had hoped; but had only for a time, it seems, lain asleep. Their constant cry had ever been *The church is in danger*. He was sorry to observe some dignitaries of the church, men of distinguished talents, whom he held in great respect, join in the absurd alarm, and express their affected and chimerical apprehension of danger upon the present occasion. Were there not many avowed Dissenters both in that and the other House of Parliament? Yet no danger was ever entertained from that circumstance to the constitution. 'But,' say the party, 'if you make the Dissenter an exciseman there will be danger.' The High Church party were in the general *Jacobites*—the

avowed advocates of the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. This reminded him of what Dean SWIFT had said, in his usual spirit of sarcasm, 'That, though every Whig might not be an infidel, yet he was sure every infidel was a Whig.' So with much more truth it might be said, that 'Though every High Church-man might not be *Jacobite*, yet every *Jacobite* most certainly was a High Church-man.' While this party were hostile to the reigning family; were active in exciting tumults, insurrections, and rebellions; the Dissenters had distinguished themselves as good, peaceable, faithful, and loyal subjects. Yet the party are allowed, in this enlightened age, again to sound their false alarm, to repeat their senseless cry of *the Church being in danger*. The sentiments of HOADLEY, and other dignitaries of his time, he had thought sufficient to make the clergy forget their dull and idle cant, by convincing them of the absurdity of all religious tests. Danger was apprehended to the church from the supine indolence of the clergy, and the superior activity and zeal of the Dissenters in the discharge of the duties of their sacred functions. To fetter the Dissenters with penalties and incapacities, on account of the remissness of the established clergy, was a measure replete with cruelty, absurdity, and injustice: it went upon the principles of making one man suffer for the neglect of another. He ridiculed every idea of danger to the church from the repeal of the Test laws. The Dissenters were less numerous as a body; had little or no power, when compared with the authority and affluence of the church. He was sorry to observe Bishops, Deans, Prebends, and other dignitaries of the church, who were in possession of great landed estates and splendid establishments, so ready to stand forward the avowed advocates of oppression and persecution, under the false pretence of danger. Whence could the danger arise? He defied any one to prove it. At the Union, two churches had been establish-

ed in different parts of Great Britain. He would ever commend the enlightened policy of that time, which allowed both the kirk in Scotland, and the hierarchy in England, to be religions equally true. The Episcopalians in Scotland had an equal right with the members of the kirk to the acceptance and enjoyment of civil offices. There existed no religious test in Scotland; there was therefore no act of indemnity necessary to justify the Episcopalians for their patriotic services during the rebellions. From the conduct of the kirk, it could not be argued, that those, whose religious principles were at variance with the creed of the English hierarchy, were enemies to toleration. The Dissenters were said to be always strenuous advocates for toleration, when out of power, but were capable of great intolerance, when in possession of authority. Was this the fact? Quite otherwise. In America, what was their conduct? They were in full possession of power; but were they at all intolerant? No. So far from it, that universal toleration prevailed throughout every province, without any disadvantage to the government of the States. Notwithstanding the greatest diversity of religious opinions, yet the most cordial unanimity prevailed in all their civil operations. In Ireland too, the test had been repealed for years, and the church had been in no danger, though surrounded by Dissenters in an infinitely greater proportion than in this country. If, therefore, the church of Ireland, under such disproportion of numbers, had so long existed, without danger from the repeal of the Test laws; and if the kirk of Scotland, with little power and influence, had done the same, was it not absurd in the extreme to say, that the established church of England, with all its power, wealth, and numbers, could not do the same without endangering its existence? Such fears he would repeat were idle and chimerical, asserted only, in his opinion, for the purposes of oppression. With regard to the church itself,

he highly approved of its discipline and abstract duties; it had wisely avoided all that was superstitious, and retained what to him appeared to be essential. He therefore admired and revered it, and declared himself firmly attached to it; but of the individuals that composed it, he must say of them, as of all other public bodies, that while he highly respected some, there might be others who could have no claim to his regard. They, no doubt, were a mixture of good and bad; he must however strongly object to the church, whenever it presumed to act as a party; its interference in politics had been always mischievous, and often dangerous to the constitution. The church as a party was a formidable body; it had, formerly, as now, used the powerful engine of their real, or pretended fear, which in the hands of tyrants had ever proved the signal of oppression. The church had long taken the lead in the cause of *Jacobitism*, and, in the reign of Queen ANNE, had been active in the instigation of tumults and confusion, in support of the doctrines of arbitrary power. He ever should be a decided friend to an established religion; but it should be an establishment founded on the opinions of the majority of the people. The truth of religion was not a subject for the discussion of parliament; their duty was only to sanction that which was so universally approved, and to allow it the emoluments of the state. A conviction of the reasonableness of such a procedure dictated so much liberality in the religious establishments at the Union, as well as the more recent establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada. Innovations were said to be dangerous at all times, but particularly so now by the alteration of affairs in France. But the hopes of the Dissenters were not founded upon the most distant reference to the transactions which had taken place in that kingdom. Their application to the House, on the present subject, had been made three years ago, when the most sagacious among them

could not form any thing like a conjecture of what has since happened in that country. Yet he saw no reason but the example of France ought to have its influence; the church there was now suffering for its former intolerance. However he might rejoice in the emancipation of near thirty millions of his fellow-creatures, and in the spirit which gave rise to the Revolution, yet he was free to own there were some acts of the new government which he could not applaud. The summary and indiscriminate forfeiture of the property of the church came under this description. But the violence of this proceeding might in some measure, be attributed to former ecclesiastical oppressions; and, in particular, to the impolitic revocation of the edict of Nantes. The constitution civil and ecclesiastical, previously to this period, had remained unmolested and unimpaired; there existed no test; Protestants and Catholics were indiscriminately admitted into civil and military offices; but, by that rash measure, liberality and toleration were thrown away; the arts and manufactures were driven into other countries, to flourish in a more genial soil, and under a milder form of government. This should serve as a caution to the church of England; persecution may prevail for a time, but it generally terminates in the punishment of its abettors. He observed, that the church had owed its existence to a rational innovation, and the constitution had derived much of its excellence and beauty from the same source; the Reformation, had established the one, and the Revolution the other. The nature of monarchy was such as to require the occasional renovation of the people's rights, to prevent encroachments. It was the opinion of Mr. HUME, to whose talents, as a philosopher, he paid just deference, that monarchy would soon become absolute, if not subject to frequent innovations. But what was the innovation which was now so much dreaded? Was it an attack on *Magna Charta*, or the *Bill of Rights*? No:

it was only the simple repeal of an act of CHARLES the Second, which the parliament passed out of compliment to the king, in the overflowing effusion of their loyalty, at the conclusion of the civil war. The Corporation act went to exclude Dissenters whose political sentiments were considered as anti-monarchical; and the Test act was intended to operate against the Roman Catholics. He should ever reprobate such acts as the pillars of the constitution. What! was any specific mode of administering the Lord's Supper to be considered as the corner-stone of the constitution? A constitution, with such a rotten foundation, was, in his opinion, not worth preserving. The leading feature of true religion he had always understood to be Charity. When he viewed the church, and saw churchmen, discovering a spirit directly opposite to that religion they professed, he must consider them as men who were ambitious of a monopoly of power, under the mask of an affected apprehension of danger. The Christian religion breathed nothing but charity and forbearance; it was neither taught originally to Kings and senators, nor had it any necessary connection with government. It had existed for centuries, without any assistance from the secular arm. Though a learned prelate [WARBURTON] had proposed a decent and honorable alliance between the church and state; yet it was not an alliance founded on the purity of the Christian doctrines, but merely on promises of mutual support. According to this new-fangled doctrine, the church was not to depend upon its own merits, nor was religion to be established by the truth of its own evidence; but it was to be supported by the assistance of civil authority. Was this the manner in which Christianity was first propagated? In its infancy when it had to combat the prejudices of mankind, and to make its way through an infinite number of other obstacles, was its progress indebted for any support from the indulgence of the Roman Emperor's

senate? For a Christian prelate, then, to appeal from the truth of the Scriptures to the authority of secular power, in support of the Christian religion, was an idea he should ever reprobate as contemptible and shameful. Religion, in his opinion, had no reference whatever to the political constitution of a state; from such an alliance it would contaminate, and be contaminated; the one would be corrupted, and the other enslaved. The clergy, he was sorry to observe, had uniformly acted with great artifice and duplicity, down from the time of the Reformation, when they made their own chimerical fears, which existed no where but in their own heated and disordered imaginations, the ground of unprovoked and unmerited persecution. Report said (but he sincerely hoped without foundation) that a certain prelate of the church [St. DAVID'S] had recently written a circular letter to the clergy of his diocese, requiring them to withhold their votes and interests at the next general election from a particular member of that House, for his having voted for the present motion, when under discussion during the last session. If innovation was a subject of so much dread, what innovation could be more alarming to the constitution than this precedent of an English bishop, interfering not only in an election for a member of parliament, in direct violation of that House, but also presuming to marshal his ecclesiastical tribe in a civil array, and denouncing his anathemas against every one who should be of opinion that the civil power could exist independently of the authority of the church? Such antichristian conduct was ill calculated to remove the spirit of party and of faction, with which the Dissenters must be actuated, under the pressure of grievance, oppression, and persecution. Many of the Dissenters, he was persuaded, were friendly to the church establishment; but by such intolerance they might be driven to entertain the most inveterate enmity. If their influence and opposition are now dreaded,

how much more so ought they to be, when roused into resentment, irritated into hatred, and persecuted into hostility? It had often proved a matter of lamentation to High Churchmen, and it had been complained of as a grievance, that Dissenters had on some occasions conformed to the Test laws. It was rather a delicate point for any clergyman to scruple complying with an application for the administration of the sacrament; though, in some instances, a refusal had been made on the ground of immorality. But he must condemn such a political establishment, which required a man to go to our church, while he belonged to a sect which, perhaps, held tenets diametrically opposite; it was a direct method to promote vice, immorality, and profaneness. The abuse of so much power, too, in the hands of the clergy, might be attended with infinite mischief. The repeal of the Test laws, it was said, would inevitably prove an infringement of the Union. But this was a palpable and egregious error. So far were the Test laws from being among the essential articles of the Union, that when they were formerly proposed to become perpetual, they were rejected.

“ Some stress had been laid on the writings and opinions of some individuals among the Dissenters, who had publicly avowed their opposition to the church establishment. Dr. PRIESTLEY had been particularly pointed out as an objectionable character in this respect; but what danger could possibly arise from the adverse opinions of this truly eminent and learned gentleman to the hierarchy? Was it any proof of a design to subvert the ecclesiastical constitution? No—Any person might disapprove of our civil constitution, might object to the popular part of our government, might avow his sentiments ever so openly; and yet be not liable to any civil incapacity. A noble duke [RICHMOND] high in office, had attempted a reform in the constitution of the legislature; the chan-

cellor of the exchequer had done the same ; but the patriotic exertions of both had failed of success ; yet, from their opinions, no danger had been apprehended to the constitution. After such an instance, then, of what little influence opinions have on practice, we might as safely allow Dr. PRIESTLEY to be at the head of the church, as the present minister at the head of the treasury ; as the opinions of the one were not more hostile to the heirarchy than those of the other had been to the present constitution of the legislature. Another learned gentleman, [Dr. PRICE] in his sermon on the anniversary of the Revolution, had delivered many noble sentiments, worthy an enlightened philosopher, who was unconfined by local attachments, and gloried in the freedom of all the human race. Though he approved of his general principles, yet he considered his arguments would have better become his speech than a sermon. To make of the pulpit, the altar, or sacramental table, political engines, he must ever condemn, whether in a Dissenter, or a Churchman. The clergy in their sermons ought no more to handle political topics than the House to discuss subjects of morality and religion. Arguing as he had done against the prostitution of the sacramental test, religion and politics ought ever to be kept separate.

“ Whatever may be the fate of the present question, of this he was fully confident, that if the Test laws were once repealed, the jealousy of the church would be at an end ; if the barrier of partition was removed, the very name of Dissenter would be no more. Should the majority of the House, however, determine in favour of the continuance of the Test laws, it will only serve to keep alive a spirit of animosity between the parties ; it may lead to stronger exertions in defence of civil rights ; and other applications to the wisdom and justice of the legislature must be the necessary consequence. Some distinguished writers upon the subject had asserted, that as the

Test laws had received the sanction of parliament, it was the duty of the Dissenters quietly and implicitly to submit. But was not this doctrine repugnant to the privilege, which was the boast of every British subject, of petitioning the legislature, when oppressed or aggrieved by any law? There was an end to our liberty at once, if we durst neither complain of grievance, nor petition for redress. The Dissenters, he hoped, would strenuously persevere in their applications, until they found the object of their wishes gratified in a complete toleration. In pleading their cause, he had only supported the principles of general toleration, and the universal rights of mankind. In all the great political questions which he had the honour to introduce for the discussion of parliament, he had always had the good fortune to agree in opinion, and to experience the support of all those friends to whom he was attached from principles. Though he should ever glory in the name of a Whig, as an honorable distinction which characterised the advocates of civil and religious liberty; though it was the pride of his life to act with the cordial approbation of the party to whom he belonged; yet an honorable friend, whose opinions always had the greatest weight with him, did not think as he did on the present question. Much, however, as he respected his opinions, and highly as he thought of his understanding, yet, in every contest where liberty, and the civil rights of men were involved, he should ever enlist under the same standard, however formidable his opponents in the ranks. In the part he had that day taken, the tongue of slander might possibly represent him as another OLIVER CROMWELL, attacking the church: he had been compared to that usurper on a former occasion, as attacking the crown, even by the very men whose cause he was now pleading. Their cause, however, he had undertaken, from a conviction that it was a just cause; and he should be ever ready to become the advocate of those church-

men, who might now perhaps load him with obloquy, whenever he saw them in real danger. He would cheerfully now submit to the disadvantage of momentary unpopularity, confident that the time is not very distant, when the world would do ample justice to his exertions. He then concluded with moving, "That the House will immediately resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of so much of the said acts as requires persons, before their admission into any office, civil or military, or any place of trust under the crown, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the church of England."

Mr. Fox's motion met with a decided and unusually acrimonious opposition from Mr. PITT, Mr. BURKE, and a very great majority of the House, the noes being 294, and the ayes only 105.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

IN the speech from the throne at the meeting of parliament on the 11th of November 1783, His Majesty stated as a principal subject of their consideration, the situation of the East India Company; and in about a week after Mr. Fox brought forward his famous bill, in which he proposed to take from the Directors and Proprietors the entire administration, not only of their territorial, but of their commercial affairs, and to vest the management of them in the hands of seven commissioners named in the bill, and irremovable by the crown, except in consequence of an address of either House of Parliament. This was accompanied by a second bill, containing regulations for the government of India.

The plan was vehemently opposed in every stage of its progress through the House of Commons by Mr. PITT, Mr. DUNDAS, Mr. JENKINSON, Mr. GRENVILLE, Mr. POWIS, and all the ablest speakers of the same party. It was in one of these debates, that Mr. Fox made the following reply to the principal objections.

“ The honorable gentleman who opened the debate [Mr. Powis] first demands my attention; not indeed for the wisdom of the observations which fell from him this night (though he is acute and judicious on most occasions) but from the natural weight of all such characters in this country, the aggregate of whom should, in my opinion, always decide upon public measures; but his ingenuity was never, I think, more effectually exerted, upon

more mistaken principles, and more inconsistent with the common tenor of his conduct, than in this debate.

“ He charges me with abandoning that cause, which, he says, in terms of flattery, I had once so successfully asserted. I tell him, in reply, that if he were to search the history of my life, he would find that the period of it, in which I struggled most for the real, substantial cause of liberty, is this very moment that I am addressing you. Freedom, according to my conception of it, consists in the safe and sacred possession of a man's property, governed by laws defined and certain ; with many personal privileges, natural, civil, and religious, which he cannot surrender without ruin to himself ; and of which to be deprived by any other power, is despotism. This bill, instead of subverting, is destined to stabilitate these principles ; instead of narrowing the basis of freedom, it tends to enlarge it ; instead of suppressing its object is to infuse and circulate the spirit of liberty.

“ What is the most odious species of tyranny ? Precisely that which this bill is meant to annihilate. That a handful of men, free themselves, should execute the most base and abominable despotism over millions of their fellow creatures ; that innocence should be the victim of oppression ; that industry should toil for rapine ; that the harmless laborer should sweat, not for his own benefit, but for the luxury and rapacity of tyrannic depredation ; in a word, that thirty millions of men, gifted by Providence with the ordinary endowments of humanity, should groan under a system of despotism, unmatched in all the histories of the world.

“ What is the end of all Government ? Certainly the happiness of the governed. Others may hold other opinions ; but this is mine, and I proclaim it. What are we to think of a government, whose good fortune is supposed to spring from the calamities of its subjects ; whose aggrandizement grows out of the miseries of mankind !

This is the kind of government exercised under the East India Company upon the natives of Indostan ; and the subversion of that infamous government is the main object of the Bill in question. But in the progress of accomplishing this end, it is objected that the charter of the company should not be violated ; and upon this point, Sir, I shall deliver my opinion without disguise. A charter is a trust to one or more persons for some given benefit. If this trust be abused ; if the benefit be not obtained, and that its failure arises from palpable guilt (or what, in this case, is full as bad) from palpable ignorance or mismanagement ; will any man gravely say, that trust should not be resumed, and delivered to other hands ; more especially in the case of the East India Company, whose manner of executing this trust, whose laxity and languor produced, and tend to produce, consequences diametrically opposite to the ends of confiding that trust, and of the institution for which it was granted ! I beg of gentlemen to be aware of the lengths to which their arguments upon the intangibility of this charter may be carried. Every syllable virtually impeaches the establishment by which we sit in this house, in the enjoyment of this freedom, and of every other blessing of our government. These kind of arguments are batteries against the main pillar of the British constitution. Some men are consistent with their own private opinions, and discover the inheritance of family maxims, when they question the principles of the Revolution ; but I have no scruple in subscribing to the articles of that creed which produced it. Sovereigns are sacred, and reverence is due to every king : yet, with all my attachments to the person of a first magistrate, had I lived in the reign of JAMES the Second, I should most certainly have contributed my efforts, and borne part in those illustrious struggles, which vindicated an empire from hereditary servitude, and recorded this valuable doctrine, that '*trust abused was revocable.*'

“ No man will tell me, that a trust to a company of merchants stands upon the solemn and sanctified ground, by which a trust is committed to a monarch; and I am at a loss to reconcile the conduct of men, who approve that resumption of violated trust, which rescued and re-established our unparalleled and admirable constitution, with a thousand valuable improvements and advantages, at the Revolution; and who, at this moment, rise up the champions of the East-India Company's charter, although the incapacity and incompetence of that Company to a due and adequate discharge of the trust deposited in them by charter, are themes of ridicule and contempt to all the world; and although, in consequence of their mismanagement, connivance, and imbecility, combined with the wickedness of their servants, the very name of an Englishman is detested, even to a proverb, through all Asia; and the national character is become degraded and dishonored. To rescue that name from odium, and redeem this character from disgrace, are some of the objects of the present bill; and gentlemen should indeed gravely weigh their opposition to a measure, which, with a thousand other points, not less valuable, aims at the attainment of these objects.

“ Those who condemn the present bill, as a violation of the chartered rights of the East India Company, condemn on the same ground, I say again, the Revolution, as a violation of the chartered rights of King JAMES the Second. He, with as much reason, might have claimed the property of dominion. But what was the language of the people? No, you have no property in dominion: dominion was vested in you, as it is in every chief magistrate, for the benefit of the community to be governed; it was a sacred trust delegated by compact; you have abused the trust; you have exercised dominion for the purposes of vexation and tyranny—not of comfort, protection, and good order; and we therefore resume the power which was

originally ours ; we recur to the first principles of all government, the will of the many ; and it is our will that you shall no longer abuse your dominion. The case is the same with the East India Company's government over a territory (as it has been said by Mr. BURKE) of 280,000 square miles in extent, nearly equal to all Christian Europe, and containing 30,000,000 of the human race. It matters not whether dominion arises from conquest or from compact. Conquest gives no right to the conqueror to be a tyrant ; and it is no violation of right, to abolish the authority which is misused.

“ Having said so much upon the general matter of the bill, I must beg leave to make a few observations upon the remarks of particular gentlemen ; and first of the learned gentleman over against me [Mr. DUNDAS]. The learned gentleman has made a long, and, as he always does, an able speech ; yet, translated into plain English, and disrobed of the dexterous ambiguity in which it has been enveloped, what does it amount to ? To an establishment of the principles upon which this bill is founded, and indirect confession of its necessity. He allows the frangibility of charters, when absolute occasion requires it ; and admits that the charter of the company should not prevent the adoption of a proper plan for the future government of India, if a proper plan can be achieved upon no other terms. The first of these admissions seems agreeable to the civil maxims of the learned gentleman's life, so far as a maxim can be traced in a political character so various and flexible ; and to deny the second of these concessions was impossible, even for the learned gentleman, with a staring reason upon your table to confront him, if he attempted it.

“ The learned gentleman's bill, and the bill now before you, are grounded upon the same bottom, of abuse of trust, mal-administration, debility, and incapacity in the company, and their servants ; but the difference in the

remedy is this : the learned gentleman's bill opens a door to an influence an hundred times more dangerous than any that can be imputed to this bill, and deposits in one man an arbitrary power over millions ; not in England, where the evil of this corrupt ministry could not be felt ; but in the East Indies, the scene of every mischief, fraud, and violence. The learned gentleman's bill afforded the most extensive latitude for malversation ; the bill before you guards against it with all imaginable precaution. Every line in both the bills, which I have had the honour to introduce, presumes the possibility of bad administration, for every word breathes suspicion. This bill supposes that men are but men ; it confides in no integrity, it trusts no character ; it inculcates the wisdom of a jealousy of power, and annexes responsibility, not only to every *action*, but even to the *inaction* of those who are to dispense it. The necessity of these provisions must be evident, when it is known that the different misfortunes of the company resulted not more from what the *servants* did, than from what the *masters* did not.

“ To the probable effects of the learned gentleman's bill, and this, I beg to call the attention of the House. Allowing, for argument's sake, to the Governor General of India, under the first named bill, the most unlimited and superior abilities, with soundness of heart, and integrity the most unquestionable ; what good consequences could be reasonably expected from his extraordinary, extravagant, and unconstitutional power, under the tenure by which he held it ? Were his projects the most enlarged, his systems the most wise and excellent which human skill could advise, what fair hope could be entertained of their eventual success, when, perhaps, before he could enter upon the execution of any measure, he may be recalled in consequence of one of those changes in the administrations of this country, which have been so frequent for a few years, and which some good men wish to

see every year. Exactly the same reasons, which banish all rational hope of benefit from an Indian administration, under the bill of the learned gentleman, justify the duration of the proposed commission. If the dispensers of the plan of governing India (a place from which the answer of a letter cannot be expected in less than twelve months) have no greater stability in their situations than a British ministry—adieu to all hopes of rendering our Eastern territories of any real advantage to this country ; —adieu to every expectation of purging, or purifying the Indian system—of reform—of improvement—of reviving confidence—of regulating the trade upon its proper principles—of restoring tranquillity—of re-establishing the natives in comfort, and of securing the perpetuity of these blessings by the cordial reconciliation of the Indians with their former tyrants, upon fixed terms of amity, friendship, and fellowship. I will leave the House, and the Kingdom to judge which is best calculated to accomplish those salutary ends ; the bill of the learned gentleman, which leaves all to the discretion of one man ; or the bill before you, which depends upon the duty of several men, who are in a state of daily account to this House, of hourly account to the ministers of the crown, of occasional account to the proprietors of East India Stock, and who are allowed sufficient time to practise their plans, unaffected by every political fluctuation.

“ But the learned gentleman wishes the appointment of an Indian Secretary of State in preference to these commissioners : in all the learned gentleman’s ideas on the government of India, the notion of a new Secretary of State for the Indian department springs up, and seems to be cherished with the fondness of consanguinity ; but that scheme strikes me as liable to a thousand times more objections, than the plan in agitation. Nay, the learned gentleman had rather, it seems, the affairs of India were blended with the business of the office which I have the

honor to hold. His good disposition towards me, upon all occasions, cannot be doubted ; and his sincerity in this opinion is unquestionable. I beg the House to attend to the reason which the learned gentleman gives for this preference ; and to see the plights to which men, even of his understanding, are reduced, who must oppose. He laughs at the responsibility of the commissioners to this House, who, in his judgment will find means of soothing, and softening, and meliorating the members into an oblivion of their mal-administration. What opinion has the learned gentleman of a Secretary of State ? Does he think *him* so inert, so inactive, so incapable a creature, that, with all this vaunted patronage of the seven in his own hands, the same means of soothing, and softening, and meliorating, are thrown away upon him ? The learned gentleman has been for some years conversant with ministers ; but his experience has taught him, it seems, to consider Secretaries, not only untainted and immaculate, but innocent, harmless, and incapable. In his time, Secretaries were all purity—with every power of corruption in their hands ; but so inflexibly attached to rigid rectitude, that no temptation could seduce them to use that power for the purpose of corrupting, or, to use his own words, for soothing, or softening, or meliorating. The learned gentleman has founded his opinion of the simplicity and inaction of Secretaries, from that golden age of political probity, when his own friends were in power, and when he himself was every thing but a minister. This erroneous humanity of opinion arises in the learned gentleman's unsuspecting, unsullied nature, as well as in a commerce with only the best and purest ministers of this country ; which has given him so favorable an impression of a Secretary of State, that he thinks this patronage, so dangerous in the hands of seven commissioners, perfectly safe in *his* hands. I leave to the learned gentleman that pleasure which his mind must feel under the conviction

with which he certainly gives this opinion ; but I submit to every man who hears me, what would be the probable comments of the other side of the House, had I proposed either the erection of an Indian Secretary, or the annexation of the Indian business to the office which I now hold.

“ In the assemblage of the learned gentleman’s objections, there is one still more curious than those I have mentioned. He dislikes this bill, because it establishes an *imperium in imperio*. In the course of opposition to this measure, we have been familiarised to hear certain sentiments, and particular words in this House—but directed, in reality, to other places. Taking it, therefore, for granted, that the learned gentleman has not so despicable an idea of the good sense of the members as to expect any more attention within these walls to such a *dogma*, than has been shown to the favorite phrase of his honorable friend near him [Mr. WILLIAM PITT] who calls a bill, which backs this sinking company with the credit of the state, a *confiscation of their property*, I would wish to ask the learned gentleman, if he really holds the understanding, even of the multitude, in such contempt, as to imagine this species of argument can have the very slightest effect ! The multitude know the fallacy of it, as well as the learned gentleman himself ; they know that a dissolution of the East India Company has been wished for, scores of years, by many good people in this country, for the *very reason* that it was an *imperium in imperio*. Yet the learned gentleman, with infinite gravity of face, tells you he dislikes this bill, because it establishes this novel and odious principle. Even a glance of this bill, compared with the present constitution of the company, manifests the futility of this objection, and proves that the committee is, in its present form, a thousand times more an *imperium in imperio* than the proposed commissioners. The worst species of go-

vernment is that which can run counter to all the ends of its institution with impunity. Such exactly was the East India Company. No man can say, that the Directors and Proprietors have not, in a thousand instances, merited severe infliction; yet who did ever think of a legal punishment for either body? Now the great feature of this bill is to render the commissioners amenable, and to punish them upon delinquency.

“ The learned gentleman prides himself that his bill did not meddle with the commerce of the company; and another gentleman, after acknowledging the folly of leaving the government in the hands of the company, proposes to separate the commerce entirely from the dominion, and leave the former safe and untouched to the company itself. I beg leave to appeal to every gentleman conversant in the company’s affairs, whether this measure is, in the nature of things, practicable at this moment. That the separation of the commerce from the government of the East may be ultimately brought about, I doubt not; but when gentlemen reflect upon the immediate state of the company’s affairs; when they reflect that their government was carried on for the sake of their commerce, that both have been blended together for such a series of years; when they review the peculiar, perplexed, and involved state of the Eastern territories, their dissimilitude to every system in this part of the globe, and consider the deep and laborious deliberation with which every step for the establishment of a salutary plan of government, in the room of the present odious one, must be taken—the utter impossibility of instantly detaching the governing power from interference with the commercial body, will be clear, and indubitable.

“ A gentleman has asked, why not choose the commissioners out of the body of Directors? And why not leave the choice of the assistant Directors in the court of Proprietors? That is to say, why not do that which would

infallibly undo all you are aiming at? I mean no general disparagement, when I say, that the body of Directors have given memorable proofs, that they are not the sort of people to whom any man can look for success or salvation of India. Amongst them there are, without doubt, some individuals, respectable both for their knowledge and integrity; but I put it to the candor of gentlemen, whether they are the species of men whose wisdom, energy, and diligence, would give any promise of emancipating the East India concerns from their present disasters and disgraces? Indeed, both the questions may be answered in two words. Why not choose the Directors *who have ruined the company*? Why not leave the power of election in the Proprietors, *who have thwarted every good attempted by the Directors*?

“The last point, adverted to by the learned gentleman relates to *influence*; and upon his remarks, combined with what fell from some others upon the same subject, I beg leave to make a few observations. Much of my life has been employed to diminish the inordinate influence of the crown. In common with others, I succeeded; and I glory in it. To support that kind of influence which I formerly subverted, is a deed of which I shall never deserve to be accused. The affirmation with which I first introduced this plan, I now repeat; I reassert that this bill as little augments the influence of the crown, as any measure which can be devised for the government of India, that presents the slightest promise of solid success; and that it tends to increase it in a far less degree than the bill proposed by the learned gentleman. The very genius of influence consists in hope, or fear; fear of losing what we have, or hope of gaining more. Make these commissioners removable at will, and you set all the little passions of human nature afloat. If benefit can be derived from the bill, you had better burn it than make the duration short of the time necessary to accom-

plish the plans it is destined for. *That* consideration pointed out the expediency of a fixed period ; and, in that respect, it accords with the principle of the learned gentleman's bill ; with this superior advantage, that, instead of leaving the commissioners liable to all the influence, which springs from the appointment of a Governor General, removable at *pleasure*, this bill invests them with the power for *the time specified*, upon the same tenure that British Judges hold their station, removable upon delinquency, punishable upon guilt, but fearless of power, if they discharge their trust ; liable to no seducement, and with full time and authority to execute their functions for the common good of the country, and for their own glory. I beg of the House to attend to this difference, and then judge upon the point of increasing the influence of the crown, contrasted with the learned gentleman's bill.

“ The state of accusations against me upon this subject of *influence* is truly curious. The learned gentleman [Mr. DUNDAS] in strains of emphasis, declares, that this bill diminishes the influence of the crown beyond all former attempts ; and calls upon those who formerly voted with him in support of that influence, against our efforts to reduce it, and who now sit near me, to join him now in opposing my attempts to diminish that darling influence. He tells them, that *I out-herod HEROD* ; that I am *out-doing all my former out-doings* ; and proclaims me, as the merciless and insatiate enemy of the influence of the crown.”

On the 9th of December, Mr. Fox, attended by a numerous train of members, presented his bill at the bar of the house of lords, where it was violently opposed, and finally rejected. Among the many speeches which were delivered on that occasion, the following by lord THURLOW excited particular attention.

“ MY LORDS,

“ The noble and learned lord has not yet given any solution to my difficulties. I ask the noble and learned lord [lord LOUGHBOROUGH] if he can reconcile the principle of the present bill to the principles of the British constitution, admitting even, what we have not as yet the smallest cause to admit, that the necessity of an immediate interference by parliament is apparent. The noble and learned lord fills so high an office in two of His Majesty's courts, that I should naturally expect to see him the champion of our glorious constitution. It is not fitting that so great a character should muddle in the dirty pool of politics. The present East-India bill means evidently to create a power which is unknown to the constitution, an *imperium in imperio*; but as I abhor tyranny in all its shapes, I shall oppose most strenuously this strange attempt to destroy the true balance of our constitution. The present bill does not tend to increase the influence of the crown; but it tends to set up a power in the kingdom, which may be used in opposition to the crown, and to the destruction of the liberties of the people. I wish to see the crown great and respectable; but, if the present bill should pass, it will be no longer worthy of a man of honor to wear. The king will in fact take the diadem from his own head, and place it on the head of Mr. Fox. Your lordships have heard much of the 9th report of the Select Committee. That extraordinary performance has been in every body's hands. The ingenious author states, ‘ that the East India Company is in possession of a vast empire, with such a boundless patronage, civil, military, marine, commercial, and financial; in every department of which such fortunes have been made, as could be made no where else.’ This, my lords, is the true description of that vast and boundless patronage, which this bill means to throw into the hands of the minister of the present day. I speak the language of the late Marquis of ROCKINGHAM, for

whom I had the highest respect and regard, and to whom I have been much obliged, when I say, that every minister of this country will naturally strengthen his party by increasing his friends, and disposing of every office of honor and emolument amongst those who will support his measures : with this explanation of the system on which the present ministers act, and indeed on which all ministers must act, let me conjure your lordships to weigh well the consequences which will result to the constitution of this country, should the present bill pass into a law. By the fundamental principles of this constitution, the executive power of the state is placed in the hands of the crown. We have heard much, my lords, of late years, of the alarming influence of the crown ; I will candidly confess to your lordships, that I have never seen the influence of the crown too great. I wish to see the crown great and respectable ; and, if the boundless patronage of the East must be taken from the company, if regulations wisely adopted and steadily enforced, will not be sufficient to remedy existing evils, let the boundless patronage of the East be placed where only with safety to the constitution of this country it can be placed—in the hand of the executive government. In the last year we passed an act to prevent contractors from sitting in parliament ; but by the present bill Mr. Fox's contractors do not even vacate their seats. Such is the distinction between the crown and a subject.

“ In the last year, we passed an act to prevent Custom House officers from voting for members of parliament, so cautious were we to preserve the purity of the House of Commons, and to diminish the influence of the crown ; but, in defiance of every principle which was then professed, no jealousy is expressed of the man who is to have in his possession the boundless patronage of the East. The doctrine advanced by the noble and learned lord is indeed extraordinary. He tells you that the act of 1773 was an

infringement of the charter of the East India Company, but that his objection was, that it did not go far enough ; and therefore he would totally destroy the charter. The noble and learned lord will recollect the doctrine of the King's Attorney General [Sir ROBERT SAWYER] in the unconstitutional and infamous reign of CHARLES the Second, as detailed to us in that ministerial gazette, that receptacle of all true intelligence, Mr. WOODFALL's paper : yet, my lords, how was the doctrine of Sir ROBERT SAWYER reprobated by the Chief Justice of that day ! The charter of the city of London was taken away, not because, according to Sir ROBERT SAWYER's opinion, it was for their good, but because the court was induced to declare it had been forfeited. At the Revolution, however, it was restored, and the strongest marks of abhorrence were expressed at so atrocious a deed, perpetrated under the semblance of justice. But before the House can consider this very important bill on that ground (to which every Englishman must naturally object to it, that it is directly subversive of our venerable constitution, and on that ground I challenge the noble and learned lord to meet my argument fully and fairly) it will be necessary to consider the real state of the East India company. Let us not be misled by reports of committees from another House, to which, I again repeat, I pay as much attention as I would to the history of ROBINSON CRUSOE. Let the conduct of the East India company be fairly and fully inquired into ; let it be acquitted or condemned by evidence brought to the bar of the House. Without entering very deep into the subject, let me reply, in a few words, to an observation which fell from a noble and learned lord, that the company's finances are distressed, and that they owe at this moment a million sterling to the nation. When such a charge is brought, will parliament, in its justice, forget that the company is restricted from employing that credit, which its great and flourishing si-

tuation gives to it? Will parliament, in its justice, forget that so high is the credit of this company, that if the restrictions were taken off to-morrow morning, every demand due to the state would be discharged? Will parliament, in its justice, forget, that not all the wisdom of His Majesty's councils, nor the united wisdom of this country, has prevented us from being involved in a long, a dangerous, and expensive war? Will parliament, in its justice, forget, that though we have met with loss, misfortune, and disgrace, in every other quarter of the globe, this delinquent East India Company has surmounted the most astonishing difficulties in India? Will the justice of parliament forget, that when peace was at last restored to this unfortunate country, the conquests of this delinquent company were given up, to prevent farther sacrifices in the West? Will parliament, in its justice, forget that this delinquent company, by the additional expense of freight, or captures at sea, has sustained a loss of two millions seven hundred thousand pounds, in consequence of our national war? Will parliament, in its justice, forget, that when this country has increased its debt above one hundred millions sterling, this delinquent company wants but a little time to pay all it owes to the exchequer, or privilege to use its flowing credit? Will parliament, in its justice, forget, that at a former period, when its commerce was circumscribed, when it had not an empire to support, this delinquent company was allowed to issue bonds to the amount of three millions sterling, though now limited, at the close of an expensive and calamitous war, to the sum of fifteen hundred thousand pounds? These are circumstances which must be recollected, when we mean to violate private property—an injury which must cut every Englishman to the bone, and which nothing but the strongest necessity, fully and fairly proved, can ever justify.

“ The noble and learned lord has mentioned the depopulation of fertile provinces in India, the expulsion of a King from his palace, and the cruelties exercised upon an old woman. These, my lords, are sounding words ; but I call upon the noble and learned lord to prove the facts.

“ It is something singular, that when the character of Mr. HASTINGS is thus held up to public detestation, his name should be cautiously suppressed? Whence, my lords, this remarkable degree of delicacy towards Mr. HASTINGS? If he is a desolator of provinces, if he is a plunderer, and an enemy to the human race, let him be punished for his crimes ; but let the facts be proved. The little, low, dirty attempts of malice and faction, which have long been employed to destroy the character of that great man (as I think him) can have no weight with your lordships. How industriously, my lords, has every transaction of Mr. HASTINGS’s long government, that could tend to criminate him, been circulated ! The reports of a committee have been sold as pamphlets. The ingenuity of some men, the industry and warm imagination of others, have been long employed to sully the well earned reputation of Mr. HASTINGS. To my mind, my lords, Mr. HASTINGS is one of the most extraordinary characters this country has ever produced. He has served the East India Company thirty-three years in the most important situations, twelve years as Governor, or Governor General of Bengal. He is a man, my lords, whose integrity, whose honor, whose firmness of mind, and whose perseverance, are not only very generally acknowledged in this kingdom and in Asia, but throughout the continent of Europe. He is a man, my lords, who possesses a most extensive knowledge of the languages, the politics, the customs, and the revenues of Indostan. He is a man, my lords, who infused the spirit which animated his own mind, and rose superior to the astonishing

difficulties he had to encounter, into the breasts of our brave and intrepid countrymen, who have so nobly distinguished themselves in Asia. Mr. HASTINGS, my lords, is a man who has re-established peace in India, who furnished resources for the war, while it lasted, by an increase of revenues in Bengal, and has preserved the provinces under his more immediate control in peace and tranquillity. Mr. HASTINGS is a man, my lords, who has held a bold and consistent language throughout. When the government of this country sent three men to thwart and to oppose all his measures, he desired either to be recalled, or confirmed. Would to God, those men had never arrived there! When I consider the scene of confusion which ensued, the factions, personal, and party spirit, by which they were actuated from the very hour of landing, I am astonished that Mr. HASTINGS has been able to surmount so arduous a trial. What have been the means, my lords, to which Mr. HASTINGS has had recourse to preserve his power? Has he employed the low and dirty arts of intrigue, which have heretofore been practised? No, my lords, he has been supported by the voice of the public, by great and meritorious actions. This being my opinion of Mr. HASTINGS, I shall support him until evidence of his delinquency shall be produced. Whence, my lords, this extreme desire to avoid a full and pure discussion of this question? I again repeat it; if Mr. HASTINGS is guilty, recall him, punish him; but do not, my lords, let us be deluded by tales fabricated for the purpose of the hour, and circulated with a degree of industry which disgraces the honor and dignity of the British nation. I cannot help adding, my lords, that, to my mind, the late despatches from India contain such convincing proofs of the vigor of our government in Bengal, of the regulations formed for the collection of the revenues, and the administration of justice, throughout the provinces, added to the economical arrangement

formed in the civil and military departments, that I do believe it will not be in the power of any clerk in office, that Mr. Fox's Directors may send out, to throw Bengal into confusion again in less than two, or three years."

After the rejection of Mr. Fox's bill, Mr. PITT, who was immediately appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, brought forward a plan of his for the better government of India, on principles which left the commercial concerns of the company in their own hands; and established a Board of Control consisting of certain commissioners appointed by the King, possessing a negative on the proceedings of the company in all matters of government or politics. But as the late ministers still retained a small majority in the House of Commons, this bill, on the motion for its commitment, was lost by 222 voices against 214—The general election, which soon afterwards took place, was so favorable to Mr. PITT's wishes, that he felt the utmost confidence in again producing his bill on the 6th of July 1784, founded on the same general principles as before, but considerably improved in its details, and so completely avoiding all the exceptionable parts of Mr. Fox's bill, as to gain the assent of the company, and finally to obtain the sanction of the legislature. He introduced it with the following speech:

"No one," he said, "could be more deeply impressed than he was with the importance of the subject on which he was then going to enter: in whatever point of view he considered it, he felt that no subject could possibly be more interesting. In it were involved the prosperity and strength of this country; the happiness of the natives of those valuable territories in India which belonged to England; and finally, the constitution of England itself. India had all times been of great consequence to this country, from the resources of opulence and strength it afforded; and that consequence had, of course, increased

in proportion to the losses sustained by the dismemberment of other great possessions ; by which losses, the limits of the empire being more contracted, the remaining territories became more valuable.

“ He was aware that nothing could be more difficult than to digest a plan, which should at once confirm and enlarge the advantages derived to this country from connections with India, to render that connection a blessing to the native Indians, and at the same time preserve unviolated the essence and spirit of our own constitution from the injuries to which this connection might eventually expose it. Gentlemen would recollect, with a degree of horror, to what dangers that happy constitution was exposed last year, when a bill was introduced into parliament, which would have established a system dangerous to every thing that Englishmen held dear : they would recollect that the liberties of this country had nearly suffered shipwreck ; the danger, however, was happily over ; and the legislature had now an opportunity to consult about the means the most likely to reconcile and secure the interests of the people of this country, of the people of India, and of the British constitution, as far as it might be effected by the connection with India. To his lot fell the arduous task of proposing to the House a plan which should answer all these great purposes. He was aware that no plan could be devised, to which some objections would not lie ; he was aware that it was not possible to devise a plan that should be free from imperfections ; he should therefore console himself if he should be able to suggest the means of doing the most good to India, and to the East India company, with the least injury to our constitution. In the arrangements he should propose, it would be impossible to proceed, without giving to some body of men an accession of power ; but it was his duty to vest it, where he should have reason to think it would be least liable to abuse, at the same time that it should

be sufficient, and not more than sufficient, for all the purposes for which it should be given ; sufficient to secure to this country the wealth arising from the commerce of the company ; to the inhabitants of Hindostan, peace, and tranquillity ; and to enforce obedience, on the part of the servants of the country, to the orders that should be sent to them from home. In framing such a system, he thought it his duty never to lose sight of this principle, that though no charter could, or ought to supersede state necessity, still nothing but absolute necessity could justify a departure from charters. He admitted that charters ought not to stand in the way of the general good and safety of the country ; he admitted that no charter ought to be suffered to stand in the way of a reform, on which the being or the welfare of the country depended ; but at the same time he contended, that a charter ought never to be invaded, except when the public safety called for its alteration ; charters were sacred things ; on them depended the property, franchises, and every thing that was dear to Englishmen ; and wantonly to invade them, would be to unhinge the constitution, and throw the state into anarchy and confusion.

“ With respect to the India Company, its affairs were not in a state that called for a revocation of the charter ; the necessity which would justify a revocation, did not exist in this case ; and he felt no small degree of satisfaction in the assurance, that, at the moment when he had to propose such measures for the government of India, and the conduct of the affairs of the East India Company, as to his judgment appeared most applicable, there no longer existed any danger of the best and most sacred rights of Englishmen being made a sacrifice to the ambitious projects of those, who, under the necessity that actually existed, had taken the desperate resolution, that nothing short of measures of the most decisive and extreme nature, and measures far exceeding the necessity of the case,

could be effectual. He thanked God, so great a sacrifice had been escaped ; and he trusted that the sense plainly and incontrovertibly declared to be entertained upon the subject by the majority of the people of England, would prove to be the sense of the majority of that House ; and that they would join with him in opinion, that although it must, on all hands, be admitted, that there did exist a great and urgent necessity for the interference of the legislature with regard to the East India Company, and the future government of India, yet that neither state policy nor common prudence called for the legislature's proceeding beyond the limit of the existing necessity, much less of going the length either of destroying the rights of any individuals or bodies of men, established upon the most sacred of all foundations, the express words of solemn charters, recognized and confirmed by repeated acts of parliament, or of directly changing the constitution of the country, and departing from those known principles of government, which the wisdom of our ancestors had provided, and which had proved for ages the uninterrupted source of security to the liberties of Englishmen. It was," he said, " to be acknowledged on all hands, that no rights of any body of men, however confessed to be the rights of the most sacred sort, could supersede state necessity. To that, and that alone, they must give way ; but then it ought ever to be a rule of conduct with those, to whose lot it fell to act under such a necessity, to take care that they did not exceed it. Nothing but such a necessity could warrant any government in proceeding to do, what must be an unwelcome task for all who had any concern in its execution ; but when they found themselves obliged to discharge a duty of that irksome nature, they ought to proceed warily and with all possible tenderness and regard for those, with whose rights they felt themselves obliged to interfere, and to be

assured, that, in endeavouring to do all that their duty required, they did not unnecessarily tear up by the roots and annihilate those rights that were of essential consideration, and ought not to have been touched, because the exigency of the case did not actually require it. And though, on a former occasion, he had been derided, when he comforted himself with the idea, that, in every departure he should propose from the charter, he should have the consent and concurrence of the company, he still continued to find great consolation in the reflection, that he did no violence to the company; for no violence could be said to be done by regulations, to every one of which the company most cheerfully consented.

“ He did not find it necessary to create any system absolutely new for the government of our territories in India; he should rather endeavour to improve on the system by which those territories were governed at present. The great considerations to be looked to in the regulation of the government in India were threefold; the commerce of this country with that, and consequently the resources we derived from it; the interests of the inhabitants there; and the connection that the management of both had with our own constitution. Great inconvenience must, under the best possible devised form of government necessarily arise from the circumstance of any country deriving a considerable part of her resources from a dependency at so great a distance; and this must also add to the extreme difficulty of governing India from home, because that distance must necessarily prevent the government at home, and those who filled the executive offices in India, from acting with equal views. For this reason he must repeat what he had before taken the liberty to state, when the subject had been under the consideration of the last parliament, that as no plan of government for India, that human wisdom could suggest, was capable of perfection, so he was far from presuming to think, that

the plan he should propose, would not occasion much difference of opinion, and be liable to a variety of objections. He could only with great humility submit that plan to the judgment of parliament, which, from the maturest consideration, he had been able to select as the most practicable, and the most consonant to the present constitution; conscious, at the same time, that it was impossible for him, with so many different subjects to attend to, to have found leisure to do justice to a matter of sufficient importance to engross the attention of any man, whose mind had been vacant and unoccupied by other objects. To proceed, however, to the business to be stated, he observed, that it could not be denied, that in every project of government in India, there must be an accession of influence somewhere, which it became that House and the people in general always to regard with extreme jealousy. That influence, for obvious reasons, should not be left at home, but might, with greater safety, be trusted abroad in India, where the executive power must be lodged; as every man must see the necessity of having a government active on the spot, yet not independent of this country, but so constituted as to secure obedience to the system of measures dictated from home, while, at the same time, it was capable of preventing extortion in India, and frustrating the improper views of ambition and despotism. The channel of commerce, he said, must be our guide, as to our future expectations from our connection with India, since we ought to look to the management of our manufactures there, which must chiefly depend on the establishment of the happiness of the inhabitants, and their being secured in a state of peace and tranquillity. In order to effect this, he declared it would be necessary to give the government aboard a certain degree of power subject only to the control of a board, to be appointed at home, of the nature he had mentioned, when he had proposed a bill upon the same subject to the last

parliament. He observed, that in the present consideration, there were mixed interests to be regarded, as well as mixed objects. Government and commerce were the two great objects to be looked to, while the interest of the East India Company and the interest of the country called for their most serious attention. The commerce of the company exclusively belonged to them; nor was it till the territorial acquisitions of the company became considerable, that the public claimed any participation in the advantages arising from the resources of those acquisitions, in the obtainment of which they had borne so large a share. The commerce to and from India, therefore, he meant to leave, where it ought to be left, in the management of the company.

It had, he remarked, been ever held, that commercial companies could not govern empires; but that was a matter of speculation, which general experience proved to be not true in practice, however universally admitted in theory. The East India Company had conducted its commerce, and governed a vast empire for years; and it was to be remembered that the East India Company was no new establishment; it rested on charters and acts of parliament; those charters ought undoubtedly to be regarded, and, as far as possible, the rights exercised and enjoyed under them ought to be held sacred. But as he had before observed, there were no rights, that by accident or time became fatal to the interests of the public, or to the safety of the state, which must not be touched. The matter was, how to connect the constitution of the company with the national interests; from that regard and attention to chartered rights which he ever should profess, and which every man ought to practise, he had been led rather to consider, whether it was not possible to model the old constitution of the company, so as to make it answer every view of the state, and every interest of the public, rather than to make a new one; not thinking it necessary to confiscate, annihilate, and destroy, where the

purpose could be attained without proceeding to any such violent measures.

“ In the measures to be taken for the future government of India, if they had the company’s concurrence, it would surely be admitted that they took the safest line ; that they had pursued the wisest course ; and the measures he should propose, were such as the company agreed to. The control he had mentioned ought undoubtedly to remain where the constitution had placed all power, in the executive government of the country. The management of the commerce he meant to leave with the company. The patronage should be separate from the executive government ; but be it given where it would, he should propose regulations that would essentially curtail and diminish it, so as to render it as little dangerous as possible. The patronage, however, he would trust with no political set of men whatever. Let it be in India ; it would be free from corruption there, and when exercised under the restrictions and limitations he should propose, could, he flattered himself, be attended with no bad consequences.”

He enlarged upon these points considerably ; and then said, “ from what he had stated the House would doubtless observe, that the bill he meant to move for leave to bring in, was not different from former bills that he had stated to the House. The great point of it, as far as he had opened it, was the appointment of a separate department of board of control, to whom all despatches should be transmitted, and who should be responsible for what they did, and for what they did not do ; who should blink nothing ; who should be obliged to act upon every question that came before them : who should not shew any indulgence or partiality, or be guilty of procrastination ; who should not have the plea of other business, or in fine, on any pretence, or in any other way whatever, put off or delay the duties of their office. This institution, though certainly

new, was not charged with new duties; because the same powers of control had been given to the secretaries of state by various acts of parliament, but unfortunately they had never been exercised, having been suffered to remain dormant. He wished, therefore, to put it out of the power of that degree of laziness natural to office, any longer to defeat the public interest, by the institution of a board necessarily active and efficient. He was aware that many persons, who in general disliked, as much as he had done, the violence of the measures proposed in another bill, approved the idea of making the board of commissioners, to be instituted under the authority of that bill, permanent. He was not of this opinion; sure he was, that the permanency of such a board as that bill proposed to institute, would have added to the mischiefs of it. Such a board would have been in itself a deviation from the principles of the constitution, and its permanency would have involved it in contradictions to the executive government, that must have been attended with great public inconvenience. An institution to control the government of India must be either totally independent of the executive government of this country, or it must be subordinate to it. Ought the administration of the day to have no connection with what was going on? Let it be remembered, that a permanent board might be hostile to those who held the government at the time; a view of it, which, he trusted, would sufficiently prove, that an actual independent permanency in any such board would be an evil. The existing government ought to be, to a degree, permanent; but the Indian department must not be independent of that: he meant, therefore, to give it a ground of dependence, upon which all the various departments had a natural and legitimate dependency, viz. upon the executive government. Every government that had no other object than the public good, that was conscious of acting upon no other principles than such as were perfectly con-

stitutional, that was swayed by no motives of a personal, an interested, or an ambitious nature, but which possessed a sufficient share of the confidence of the sovereign, of parliament, and of the people at large, would, from its conduct, be permanent; and the Indian government would be so of course." Having said this, "he animadverted on the danger of once departing from the constitution, by appointing such a commission as the bill that had passed that House, but which had been rejected by the lords in the last parliament, authorised. He remarked, if the practice once obtained, there was no saying to what extent it might be carried, or how often the precedent might be multiplied; admitting it to pass in the instance of the late bill, they might have proceeded to separate and tear away all the departments from the crown, and put them one after another into so many parliamentary commissions.

"With regard to the objections that had been started, and the reasons that had been urged to prove that the company's directors ought not to be excluded from an insight of the papers of the commissioners, he was willing so far to give way to the arguments of that nature, as to permit the court of directors to see the papers of the commissioners; but they were to have no power of objecting; the decision of the commissioners must be final and binding upon the directors. He meant also to invest the commissioners with a power to originate measures, as well as to revise, correct, alter, and control those of the company; but with regard to such measures as the commissioners originated, the company were to be obliged to carry them into execution. This, he observed, took nothing from the company; since, in fact, it was nothing more than the power to put a negative on their measures, and the power of altering them, acting in another way. With respect to the appointment of the commissioners, he said, it was meant to be the same as that of persons hold-

ing great offices, viz. at the nomination of the crown. It was intended that the board should consist of none but privy councillors ; but the board should create no increase of officers, nor impose any new burdens, since he trusted there could be found persons enough who held offices of large emolument, but no great employment, whose leisure would amply allow of their undertaking the duty in question. And this circumstance, he observed, would have a good effect for the future, in rendering it necessary for ministers, when, by way of providing for their families, they appointed to offices hitherto considered as sinecures, to have some other consideration of the ability of the person about to be appointed to fill it ; a consideration that could not but occasion the description of offices, to which he was alluding, to be well filled for the future. The principal powers of this board, he recapitulated, would consist in directing what political objects the company's servants were to pursue, and in recalling such as did not pay obedience to such directions, or be able to give very satisfactory reasons to shew, that circumstances rendered disobedience a virtue. The board would be strictly a board of control ; it would have no power to appoint, nor any patronage ; consequently it could have no motive to deviate from its duty.

“ Thus much, the House would see, related solely to the government at home. With regard to the government abroad, the first and leading ideas would be to limit the subsisting patronage, and to produce an unity of system, by investing the supreme government, to be seated in Bengal, with an effectual control over every other presidency, and by investing that supreme government with executive power, and with the disposition of offices in India ; but to make it a matter less invidious, and to prevent the possibility of abuse, gradation and succession should be established as the invariable rule, except in very extraordinary cases ; with a view to which there

must be lodged in the supreme government, as in every other executive power, a discretion, which every man must see was actually necessary to be vested in an executive power, acting at such an extreme distance from the seat of the supreme government of all, but which was nevertheless to be subject to the control of the board of superintendancy to be established here at home, whose orders in this, as in every other case, the government of India must obey. Though Bengal was designed to be the supreme government, it was not to be the source of influence, that being as much as possible guarded against by the regulations designed to make a part of the bill. The officers of the government of Bengal were intended to be left to the nomination of the court of directors, subject to the negative of the crown; and the court of directors were to have the nomination of the officers of all the subordinate governments, excepting only the commander in chief, who, for various reasons, would remain to be appointed by the crown. He said it might possibly be argued, that, if the crown nominated the commander in chief, and had a negative upon the rest of the appointments, all the patronage remained in the hands of government at home. This, however, was far from being the case; the patronage of great appointments not being the sort of patronage for the public to entertain a jealousy about, and the other patronage being diffused and placed in Bengal, the influence from it was considerably weakened and diminished; add to this, all offices going by gradation and succession, would be a forcible check upon the patronage, and tend greatly to its reduction."

Having discussed this matter very fully, Mr. PITT proceeded to state, "that much would depend on the manner of administering the government in India, and that his endeavours should be directed to enforce clear and simple principles, as those from which alone a good government could arise. The first and principal object

would be to take care to prevent the government from being ambitious and bent on conquest. Propensities of that nature had already involved India in great expenses, and cost much bloodshed. These, therefore, ought most studiously to be avoided. Commerce was our object, and, with a view to its extension, a pacific system should prevail, and a system of defence and conciliation. The government there ought, therefore, in an especial manner to avoid wars, or entering into alliances likely to create wars. At the same time that he said this, he did not mean to carry the idea so far as to suggest, that the British government in India was not to pay a due regard to self-defence, to guard against sudden hostilities from the neighbouring powers, and, whenever there was reason to expect an attack, to be in a state of preparation. This was undoubtedly and indispensably necessary; but whenever such circumstances occurred, the executive power in India was not to content itself with acting there as the nature of the case might require; it was also to send immediate advice home of what had happened, of what measures had been taken in consequence of it, and of what farther measures were intended to be pursued. He mentioned also the institution of a tribunal to take cognizance of such matters, and state how far such a tribunal should be empowered to act without instructions from home. He next said, that the situation of the Indian princes, in connection with our government, and of the number of individuals living immediately under our government, were objects that ought to be the subject of inquiry.—The debts due from one Indian prince to another, over whom we had any influence, such as the claims of the nabob of Arcot upon the Rajah of Tanjore, ought, undoubtedly, to be settled on a permanent footing; this, and the debts of the natives tributary to us, ought also to be the subjects of inquiry. Another object of investigation, and an object of considerable delicacy, was the pretensions and

titles of the landholders to the lands at present in their possession; in the adjustment of this particular, much caution must be adopted, and means found, that would answer the end of substantial justice, without going the length of rigid right; because he was convinced, and every man at all conversant with Indian affairs must be convinced, that indiscriminate restitution would be as bad as indiscriminate confiscation. Another very material regulation, or rather principle of reform, from which solid hopes of providing a surplus adequate to the debt in India might be drawn, was, the retrenchment of our establishments in that country. At present it was a well known fact, that all our establishments there were very considerably overcharged; at any rate, therefore, there must be no augmentation suffered; and in order to prevent the possibility of such an improvident measure, a return of all the establishments must be called for. With regard to the means of reducing them, they ought to be laid before parliament, and submitted to the determination of both Houses. Every intended increase of the establishment ought also to be submitted to parliament, and the company to be immediately restrained from sending out any more inferior servants. He stated that it would be necessary, by proper provisos, to compel the execution of these points; and the better to guard against the continuance of that rapacity, plunder, and extortion, which was shocking to the feelings of humanity, and disgraceful to the national character, he proposed to render the company's servants responsible for what they did in every part of India, and to declare it illegal and punishable, if they, on any pretence whatever, accepted sums of money or other valuables from the natives. This would, he hoped, tend effectually to check private corruption. There were, he was aware, a certain species of presents, so much a part of the ceremonies inseparable from the manners of the East, that an attempt to direct that they

should not be received would be utterly impracticable ; but even as much as possible to guard against any bad consequences resulting from the continuance of the practice in question, he meant that the bill should oblige the company's servants in India to keep an exact, and faithful register of all such presents.

“ With regard to those of the company's servants, who did not comply with the directions the bill would hold out to them, and with such other directions as should, under the sanction and authority of the bill, be transmitted to them from home, such persons should be considered as guilty of offences punishable in the degrees stated in the bill, which should contain a special exception of those guilty of disobedience of orders, and other crimes, which, from their consequences, being of a more fatal tendency, must be punished with great severity. In respect to this part of his subject, the House, he had no doubt, would go along with him in feeling the necessity, and at the same time the extreme difficulty, of providing a proper tribunal, before which persons charged with offences committed in India should be tried. He owned he had an extreme partiality to the present system of distributing justice in this country ; so much so, that he could not bring himself for a moment to think seriously upon the idea of departing from that system, without the utmost reluctance ; without mentioning names, however, or referring to recent instances, every man must acknowledge, that at present we had it not in our power to do justice to the delinquents of India, after their return home. The insufficiency of parliamentary prosecutions was but too obvious ; the necessity for the institution of some other process was therefore undeniable. A summary way of proceeding was what had struck him, and he believed, others who had thought much upon the subject, as most advisable ; the danger, however, was the example that must arise from any deviation from the

established forms of trial in this country, it being perhaps the first, the dearest, and the most essential consideration in the mind of every Englishman, that he held his property and his person in perfect security, from the wise, moderate, and liberal spirit of our laws. Much was to be said with respect to the case in point; either a new process must be instituted, or offences, equally shocking to humanity, opposite to justice, and contrary to every principle of religion and morality, must continue to prevail unchecked, uncontrolled, and unrestrained. The necessity of the case outweighed the risk and the hazard of the innovation; and when it was considered that those who might go to India hereafter, would know the danger of transgressing before they left England, he trusted that it would be admitted that the expedient ought to be tried. Should such a law pass, every man who should go to India in future, would, by so doing, consent to stand in the particular predicament in which the particular law placed him, and in thus agreeing to give up some of the most essential privileges of his country, he would do no more than a very numerous and honorable body of men did daily, without the smallest impeachment of their characters, or the purity of the motives that impelled their conduct."

Mr. PITT suggested loosely what his idea of the summary species of trial he meant to authorize was. He said "there must be an exception to the general rules of the law; the trials must be held by special commission; the court must not be tied down to strict rules of evidence; but they must be upon their oaths to give judgment conscientiously, and pronounce such judgment as the common law would warrant, if the evidence would reach it. Much he was aware, would depend on the constitution of the court. His design, therefore, was, that it should be composed of men of known talents, unimpeached character, and high consequence; that their impartiality

should be farther secured by their election being by ballot; and that a certain number out of the whole nominated should make a court, in order that there might exist the chance of a choice by ballot. The persons to be balloted for, should be some of them from among the judges, some members of the House of Lords, and some members of that House. Such a mixed assemblage, from the very first characters in the kingdom, would leave no room for suspicion, or possible impeachment of justice; and, in order still more strongly to fortify the subject against injustice, they should not be chosen till the hour of trial, and should then be all sworn. To effect the purposes of the institution of such a tribunal, they should be empowered to take depositions, and receive information, communicated by witnesses who were in India when the delinquent was stated to have committed the offences he might stand charged with; and farther, they should be judges both of the law and fact. With regard to the punishments, they should be governed by the punishments the law, as it stood, authorised in cases of misdemeanour, viz. fine and imprisonment; but the extent of these should rest in the discretion of the court, to apportion according to their opinion of the proved enormity of the crime; and as a farther means of rendering such a tribunal awful, and of giving effect to its plans for preventing the perpetration of crimes shocking to humanity, it should be armed with the power of examining the parties charged as delinquents, by interrogatories, as to the value of their effects, in order the better to be able to govern the *quantum* of the fine to be levied in case of conviction; it should also be armed with the power of examining the amount of any man's property on his arrival in England from India; and since purity and abstinence were the objects which every man must desire should characterize the conduct of their countrymen in Asia, the company should not have it in their power to employ any one of their servants convicted

of a misdemeanor while he had been in India, nor should any person be suffered to return to that country after his stay in this beyond a certain limited period."

Mr. PITT interspersed his notification of the different principles and regulations, which his intended bill went to establish, with a variety of illustrations and arguments; and concluded with moving,

"That leave be given to bring in a bill for the better regulation and management of the East India Company, and of the possessions in India."

The motion, after a few observations from Mr. Fox, was agreed to.

CHAPTER IX.

ON IMPEACHMENTS.

AMONG these that of WARREN HASTINGS attracted the most considerable share of public attention. From the great number of eloquent speeches delivered on this subject, we have been induced to select the following memorable one of Mr. SHERIDAN, respecting the *Begum Princesses of Oude*, which proved decisive as to the question.

The House having resolved itself, on the 7th of February 1787, into a committee on the fourth charge of Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEMPSTER begged leave to acquaint the House, that Sir ELIJAH IMPEY, having fully and coolly revolved in his mind the nature, scope, and perspicuity of his former evidence, and assisted his fresh researches by the most accurate examination of his papers, discovered, that the answers which he gave to some of the questions put to him, during the course of the preceding evening, were less explicit and decisive than he desired to make them; and of course, not totally including all which ought to have been submitted to a parliamentary consideration; he, therefore, earnestly wished to embrace an opportunity of setting his evidence to rights; and, for that purpose, as well as to save the time of the committee, he had written the explanation, which he was desirous of giving upon that paper, that it might be read to the committee. Mr. DEMPSTER then read the paper, the general tendency of which was to authenticate the depositions taken by Sir ELIJAH at Lucknow, by de-

claring that the translator had been sworn, and had deposed that the translation was authentic and correct.

Mr. SHERIDAN commenced his speech by observing, "that had it been possible to have received, without a violation of the established rules of parliament, the paper which the honorable member [Mr. DEMPSTER] had just now read, he should willingly have receded from any forms of the House, for the purpose of obtaining new lights, and farther illustration on the important subject then before them; not indeed that on the present occasion he found himself so ill prepared, as merely, for this reason, to be prevented from proceeding to the discharge of his duty; neither, to speak freely, was he inclined to consider any explanatory additions to the evidence of Sir ELIJAH IMPEY so much framed to elucidate, as to perplex and contradict. Needless to his present purpose was it for him to require Sir ELIJAH, *legally* to recognize what had been read in *his* name by the honorable gentleman. In fact, neither the informality of any subsisting evidence, nor the adducement of any new explanations from Sir ELIJAH IMPEY, could make the slightest impression upon the vast and strong body of proof which he should now bring forward against WARREN HASTINGS. Yet, if any motive could so far have operated upon him, as to make him industriously seek for renewed opportunities of questioning Sir ELIJAH, it would result from his fresh and indignant recollection of the low and artful stratagem of delivering to the members, and others, in this last period of parliamentary inquiry, printed hand-bills of defence, the contents of which bespoke a presumptuous and empty boast of completely refuting all which, at any time *had*, or even *could* be advanced against Mr. HASTINGS, on the subject of the fourth article in the general charge of a right honorable member, Mr. BURKE. But even this was far beneath his

notice. The rectitude and strength of his cause were not to be prejudiced by such pitiful expedients ; nor should he waste a moment in counteracting measures, which, though insidious, were proportionately frivolous and un-availing. Nor would he take up the time of the committee with any general arguments to prove, that the subject of the charge, which it fell to his lot to bring forward, was of great moment and magnitude. The attention which parliament had paid to the affairs of India, for many sessions past, the voluminous productions of their committees on that subject, the various proceedings in that House respecting it, their own strong and pointed resolutions, the repeated recommendation of his Majesty, and their reiterated assurances of paying due regard to those recommendations, as well as various acts of the legislature, were all of them undeniable proofs of the moment and magnitude of the consideration, and incontrovertibly established this plain, broad fact, that parliament directly acknowledged that the British name and character had been dishonored and rendered detested throughout India, by the malversation and crimes of the principal servant of the East India Company. That fact having been established beyond all question by themselves, and by their own acts, there needed no argument, on his part, to induce the committee to see the importance of the subject about to be discussed on that day, in a more striking point of view, than they themselves had held it up to public observation. There were, he knew, persons without doors, who affected to ridicule the idea of prosecuting Mr. HASTINGS, and who not inconsistently redoubled their exertions, in proportion as the prosecution became more serious, and to increase their sarcasms upon the subject, by asserting that parliament might be more usefully employed ; that there were matters of more immediate moment to gain their attention ; that a commercial treaty with France

had been just concluded, and that it was an object of a vast and comprehensive nature, and of itself sufficient to engross their attention. To all this he would oppose these questions. Was parliament mispending its time by inquiring into the oppressions practised on millions of unfortunate persons in India, and endeavouring to bring the daring delinquent, who had been guilty of the most flagrant acts of enormous tyranny and rapacious speculation, to exemplary and condign punishment? Was it a misuse of their functions to be diligent in attempting, by the most effectual means, to wipe off the disgrace affixed to the British name in India, and to rescue the national character from lasting infamy? Surely no man who felt either for the one, or the other, would think {a business of greater moment or magnitude could occupy his attention, or that the House could with too much steadiness, too ardent a zeal, or too industrious a perseverance, pursue its object. Their conduct in this respect, during the course of the preceding year, had done them immortal honor, and proved to all the world, that however degenerate an example of Englishmen some of the British subjects had exhibited in India, the people of England collectively speaking and acting by their representatives, felt, as men *should* feel on such an occasion; that they were anxious to do justice, by redressing injuries, and punishing offenders, however high their rank, however elevated their station. Their indefatigable exertions in committees appointed to inquire concerning the affairs of India, their numerous, elaborate, and clear reports, their long and interesting debates, their solemn addresses to the throne, their rigorous legislative acts, their marked detestation of that novel and base sophism in the principles of judicial inquiry, (constantly the language of the Governor-General's servile dependents) that crimes might be compounded, that the guilt of Mr. HASTINGS was to be balanced by

his successes, that fortunate events were a full and complete set off against a system of oppression, corruption, breach of faith, speculation, and treachery; and finally, their solemn and awful judgment that in the case of *Benares*, Mr. HASTINGS's conduct was a proper object of parliamentary impeachment had covered them with applause, and brought them forward in the face of all the world, as the objects of perpetual admiration. Not less unquestionably just than highly virtuous was the assertion of the Commons of Great Britain, that there were acts which no political necessity could warrant, and that amidst flagran- cies of such an inexplicable description was the treatment of CHEIT SING. To use the well-founded and emphatic language of a right honorable gentleman, [Mr. PITT] the committee had discovered in the administration of Mr. HASTINGS proceedings of strong injustice, of grinding oppression, and unprovoked severity. In this decision the committee had, also, vindicated the character of his right honorable friend, Mr. BURKE, from the slanderous tongue of ignorance and perversion. They had by their vote on that question, declared, that the man who brought the charges was no false accuser; that he was not moved by envy, by malice, nor by any unworthy motives to blacken a spotless name; but that he was the indefatigable, persevering, and, at length, successful champion of oppressed multitudes against their tyrannical oppressor. With sound justice, with manly firmness, with unshaken integrity, had his right honorable friend, on all occasions, resisted the timid policy of mere remedial acts; even the high opinion of Mr. HASTING's successor, even the admired worth of lord CORNWALLIS's character, had been deemed by his honorable friend an inadequate atonement to India for the injuries so heavily inflicted on that devoted country. Animated with the same zeal, the committee had, by that memorable vote, given a solemn pledge of their farther intentions. They had audibly said to India—you shall no longer

be seduced into temporary acquiescence by sending out a titled governor, or a set of vapouring resolutions—It is not with stars and ribbands, and all the badges of regal favor, that we atone to you for past delinquencies. No! you shall have the solid consolation of seeing an end to your grievances, by an example of punishment for those that have already taken place. The House has set up a beacon, which, while it served to guide their own way, would also make their motions more conspicuous to the world which surrounded, and beheld them. He had no doubt but in their manly determination, to go through the whole of the business with the same steadiness which gave such sterling brilliancy of character to their outset, they might challenge the world, to observe and judge of them by the result. Impossible was it for such men to become improperly influenced by a paper, bearing the signature of WARREN HASTINGS, and put not many minutes before into *their* hands, as well as his own, on their entrance into the House. This insidious paper he felt himself at liberty to consider as a second defence, and a second answer to the charge he was about to bring forward; a charge replete with proof of criminality of the blackest die, of tyranny the most vile and premeditated, of corruption the most open and shameless, of oppression the most severe and grinding, of cruelty the most hard and unparalleled. But he was far from meaning to rest the charge on assertion, or on any warm expressions which the impulse of wounded feelings might produce. He would establish every part of the charge by the most unanswerable proof, and the most unquestionable evidence; and the witness whom he would bring forth to support every fact he should state should be, for the most part, one whom no man would venture to contradict—WARREN HASTINGS himself. Yet *this* character had friends, nor were they blameable. They might believe him guiltless, because he asserted his integrity. Even the partial warmth of friendship, and the emotions

of a good, admiring, and unsuspecting heart, might not only carry them to such lengths, but incite them to rise with an intrepid confidence in his vindication. Again," Mr. SHERIDAN added, "he would repeat that the vote of last session, wherein the conduct of this pillar of India, this corner-stone of our strength in the East, this talisman of the British territories in Asia, was censured, did the greatest honor to this house, as it must be the forerunner of speedy justice on *that character*, which was said to be above censure, and whose conduct, we were given to understand, was not within the reach even of suspicion; but whose deeds indeed were such as no difficulties, no necessity could justify; for where is the situation, however elevated, and in that elevation however embarrassed, that can authorise the wilful commission of oppression and rapacity? If at any period a point arose, on which inquiry had been full, deliberate, and dispassionate, it was the present. There were questions in which party conviction was supposed to be a matter of easy acquisition; and if this inquiry were to be considered merely as a matter of party, he should regard it as very trifling indeed; but he professed to God, that he felt in his own bosom the strongest personal conviction, and he was sensible that many other gentlemen did the same. It was on that conviction, that he believed the conduct of Mr. HASTINGS in regard to the nabob of *Oude* and the *Begums*, comprehended every species of human offence. He had proved himself guilty of rapacity, at once violent and insatiable—of treachery, cool and premeditated—of oppression, useless and unprovoked—of breach of faith, unwarrantable and base—of cruelty, unmanly and unmerciful. These were the crimes of which, in his soul and conscience, he arraigned WARREN HASTINGS, and of which he had the confidence to say he should convict him. As there were gentlemen ready to stand up his advocates, he challenged them to watch him—to watch if he advanced one inch of

assertion for which he had not solid ground ; for he trusted nothing to declamation. He desired credit for no fact which he did not prove, and which he did not indeed demonstrate beyond the possibility of refutation. He should not desert the clear and invincible ground of truth, throughout any one particle of his allegations *against* Mr. HASTINGS, who uniformly aimed to govern India by his own arbitrary power, covering with misery upon misery a wretched people, whom providence had subjected to the dominion of this country ; while, in *defence* of Mr. HASTINGS, not one single circumstance grounded upon truth was stated. He would repeat the words, and gentlemen might take them down. The attempt at vindication was false throughout."

Mr. SHERIDAN now pursuing the *examination* of Mr. HASTINGS' defence, observed, " that there could not exist a single plea for maintaining that the defence against the particular charge now before the committee was hasty ; Mr. HASTINGS had had sufficient time to make it up ; and the committee saw that he had thought fit to go back as far as the year 1775 for pretended ground of justification from the charge of violence and rapacity."

Mr. SHERIDAN here read a variety of extracts from the defence, which stated the various steps taken by Mr. BRISTOW in the years 1775 and 1776, to procure from the *Begums* aid to the *Nabob*. " Not one of these facts, as stated by Mr. HASTINGS, was true. Groundless, nugatory, and insulting were the affirmations of Mr. HASTINGS, that the seizure of treasure from the *Begums*, and the exposition of their pilfered goods to public auction, (unparalleled acts of open injustice, oppression, and inhumanity) were in any degree to be defended by those encroachments on their property, which had taken place *previous to his* administration, or by those sales which they themselves had solicited as a favorable mode of supplying a part of their aid to the *Nabob*. The relation of a series of

plain, indisputable facts would irrecoverably overthrow a subterfuge so pitiful, a distinction so ridiculous ! It must be remembered, that, at that period, the *Begums* did not *merely desire*, but they most expressly stipulated, that of the thirty lacks promised, eleven should be paid in sundry articles of manufacture. Was it not obvious, therefore, that the sale of goods in the first case, far from partaking of the nature of an act of plunder, became an extension of relief, of indulgence, and of accommodation ? But however he would not be content, like Mr. HASTINGS, with barely making assertions, or, when made against his statement, with barely denying them ; on the contrary, whenever he objected to a single statement, he would bring his refutation, and almost in every instance, Mr. HASTINGS himself should be his witness. By the passages which he should beg leave to read, Mr. HASTINGS wished to insinuate, that a claim was set up in the year 1775 to the treasure of the *Begums*, as belonging of right to the *Nabob*. Mr. SHERIDAN, from a variety of documents, chiefly from the minutes of the supreme council, of which Mr. HASTINGS had been the president, explained the true state of that question. Treasure, which was the source of all the cruelties, was the original pretence which Mr. HASTINGS had made to the company for this proceeding, and through the whole of his conduct he had alleged the principles of Mahomedanism in mitigation of the severities he had sanctioned ; as if he meant to insinuate, that there was something in Mahomedanism, which rendered it impious for a son not to plunder his mother. But to shew how the case precisely stood, when Mr. HASTINGS began the attacks, Mr. SHERIDAN read the minutes of General CLAVERING, Colonel TONSON, and Mr. FRANCIS, who severally spoke of a claim which had been made by the *Nabob* on *Bhow Begum*, in the year 1775, amounting to two and one half lacks : the opinion contained in these minutes was, that women were, on the death of their hus-

bands, entitled by the Mahomedan law only to the property within the *Zenana* where they lived. This opinion was decisive. Mr. BRISTOW used no threats—no military execution or rigor was even menaced: the *Begums* complied with the requisition then made; and the disputed property then claimed was given up. After this, the farther treasure, namely that which was within the *Zenana*, was confessedly her own. No fresh right was set up—no pretence was made of any kind to the residue. Nay, a treaty was signed by the *Nabob*, and ratified by the resident, Mr. BRISTOW, that on her paying thirty lacks, she should be freed from all farther application, and the company were bound by Mr. BRISTOW to guarantee this treaty. Here then was the issue. After this treaty, thus ratified, could there be an argument as to the right of the treasure of the *Begums*? And if the Mahomedan law had ever given a right, was not that right then concluded? To prove, however, the reliance which the Princesses of *Oude* had entertained, even in the year 1775, of receiving protection and support from the British government, an expectation so fatally disappointed in latter times, Mr. SHERIDAN read an extract of a letter from the *Begum*, the mother of the *Nabob*, to Mr. HASTINGS, received at Calcutta, December the 22d, 1775, where she says, “If it is *your pleasure* that the mother of the late *Nabob*, myself, and his other women and infant children should be reduced to a state of dishonor and distress, we *must submit*; but if, on the contrary, you call to mind the friendship of the late blessed *Nabob*, you will exert yourself effectually in favour of us, who are helpless.” And again, “If you do not approve of my remaining at Feyzabad, send a person here in your name, to remove the mother of the late *Nabob*, myself, and about 2000 other women and children, that we may reside with honor and reputation in some other place.”—Mr. SHERIDAN, in a regular progression of evidence, proceeded to state the successive

periods, and finally to bring down the immediate subject in question to the day in which Mr. HASTINGS embraced the project of plundering the *Begums*; and to justify which, he had exhibited in his defence four charges against them, as the grounds and motives of his own conduct.

“ 1st, That they had given disturbance at all times to the government of the *Nabob*, and that they had long manifested a spirit hostile to his, and the English government.

“ 2dly, That they excited the *Zemindars* to revolt at the time of the insurrection at *Benares*, and of the resumption of the *Jaghires*.

“ 3dly, That they resisted by armed force the resumption of their own *Jaghires*; and

“ 4thly, That they excited and were accessory to the insurrection at *Benares*.”

To each of these charges Mr. SHERIDAN gave distinct and separate answers. First, on the subject of the imputed disturbances which they were falsely said to have occasioned, he could produce a variety of extracts, many of them written by Mr. HASTINGS himself, to prove that, on the contrary, they had particularly distinguished themselves by their friendship for the English, and the various good offices which they had rendered the government.—“ Mr. HASTINGS” Mr. SHERIDAN observed, “ left Calcutta in 1781, and proceeded to Lucknow, as he said himself, with two great objects in his mind; namely, *Benares* and *Oude*. What was the nature of these boasted resources? That he should plunder one, or both; the equitable alternative of a highwayman, who in going forth in the evening, hesitates which of his resources to prefer, Bagshot or Hounslow. In such a state of generous irresolution, did Mr. HASTINGS proceed to *Benares* and *Oude*. At *Benares*, he failed in his pecuniary object. Then, and not till then, not on account of any ancient enmities shewn

by the *Begums*—not in resentment for any old disturbances, but because he had failed in one place, and that he had but two in his prospect, did he conceive the base expedient of plundering these aged women. He had no pretence—he had no excuse—he had nothing, but the arrogant and obstinate determination to govern India by his own corrupt will, to plead for his conduct. Inflamed by disappointment in his first project, he hastened to the fortress of *Chunar*, to meditate the more atrocious design of instigating a son against his mother, of sacrificing female dignity and distress to parricide and plunder. At *Chunar* was that infamous treaty concerted with the Nabob Vizier, to despoil the Princesses of *Oude* of their hereditary possessions. There it was that Mr. HASTINGS had stipulated with one, whom he called an *independent Prince*, ‘ that as great distress has arisen to the *Nabob’s* government from the military power and dominion assumed by the *Jaghierdars*, he be permitted to resume such as he may find necessary ; with a reserve, that all such, for the amount of whose Jaghiers the company are guarantees, shall, in case of the resumptions of their lands, be paid the amount of their net collections, through the resident, in ready money ; and that no English resident be appointed to *Furruckabad*.

“ No sooner was this foundation of iniquity thus instantly established, in violation of the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the British government ; no sooner had Mr. HASTINGS determined to invade the substance of justice, than he resolved to avail himself of her judicial forms ; and accordingly despatched a messenger for the Chief Justice of India, to assist him in perpetrating the violations he had projected. Sir ELIJAH being arrived, Mr. HASTINGS, with much art, proposed a question of opinion, involving an unsubstantiated fact, in order to obtain even a surreptitious approbation of the measure he had predetermined to adopt. ‘ The *Begums* being in ac-

tual rebellion, might not the *Nabob* confiscate their property?" "Most undoubtedly," was the ready answer of the friendly judge. Not a syllable of inquiry intervened, as to the existence of the imputed rebellion, nor a moment's pause as to the ill purposes to which the decision of a Chief Justice might be perverted. It was not the office of a friend to mix the grave caution and cold circumspection of a judge, with an opinion taken in such circumstances; and Sir ELIJAH had previously declared, that he gave his advice not as a judge, but as a friend, a character he equally preferred, in the strange office which he undertook of collecting defensive affidavits on the subject of *Benares*."

Mr. SHERIDAN said, "it was curious to reflect on the whole of Sir ELIJAH's circuit at that perilous time. Sir ELIJAH had stated his desire of relaxing from the fatigue's of office, and unbending his mind in a party of health and pleasure; yet wisely apprehending that very sudden relaxation might defeat its object, he had contrived to mix some objects of business, to be interspersed with his amusements. He had, therefore, in his little airing of nine hundred miles, great part of which he went post, escorted by an army, selected those very situations where insurrection subsisted, and rebellion was threatened; and had not only delivered his deep and curious researches into the laws and rights of nations and of treaties, in the capacity of the Oriental GROTIUS, whom WARREN HASTINGS was to study, but likewise in the humbler and more practical situation of a collector of *ex parte* evidence. In the former quality, his opinion was the premature sanction for plundering the *Begums*. In the latter character, he became the posthumous supporter of the expulsion and pillage of the *Rajah*, CHEIT SING. Acting on an unproved fact, on a position as ideal as a *datum* of the duke of RICHMOND's fabrication, he had not hesitated, in the first instance, to lend his au-

thority as a licence for unlimited persecution. In the latter, he did not disdain to scud about India, like an itinerant informer with a pedlar's pack of garbled evidence and surreptitious affidavits. What pure friendship, what a voucher of unequivocal attachment from a British Judge to such a character as WARREN HASTINGS! With a generous oblivion of duty and of honour; with a proud sense of having authorized all future rapacity, and sanctioned all past oppression, this friendly judge proceeded on a circuit of health and ease, and while the Governor General, sanctioned by this solemn opinion, issued his orders to plunder the *Begums* of their treasure, Sir ELIJAH pursued his progress, and passing through a wide region of distress and misery, explored a country that presented a speaking picture of hunger and of nakedness, in quest of objects best suited to his feelings, in anxious search of calamities most kindred to his invalide imagination.

“ Thus, while the executive power in India was perverted to the most disgraceful inhumanities, the judicial authority also became its close and confidential associate—at the same moment that the sword of government was turned to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest and meanest contamination. Under such circumstances did Mr. HASTINGS complete the treaty of *Chunar*; a treaty, which might challenge all the treaties that ever subsisted, for containing in the smallest compass the most extensive treachery. Mr. HASTINGS did not conclude that treaty till he had received from the *Nabob* a present, or rather, a bribe of 100,000*l*. The circumstances of this present were as extraordinary as the thing itself. Four months afterwards, and not till then, Mr. HASTINGS communicated the matter to the company. Unfortunately for himself, however, this tardy disclosure was conveyed in words which betray his original meaning; for with no

common incaution, he admits the present '*was of a magnitude not to be concealed.*' Mr. SHERIDAN stated all the circumstances of this bribe, and averred that the whole had its rise in a principle of rank corruption. For what was the consideration for this extraordinary bribe? No less than the withdrawing from *Oude* not only all the English gentlemen in official situations, but the whole also of the English army; and that, too, at the very moment when he himself had stated the whole country of *Oude* to be in open revolt and rebellion. Other very strange articles were contained in the same treaty, which nothing but this infamous bribe could have occasioned, together with the reserve which he had in his own mind of treachery to the *Nabob*; for the only part of the treaty which he ever attempted to carry into execution was to withdraw the English gentlemen from *Oude*. The *Nabob*, indeed, considered this as essential to his deliverance; and his observation on the circumstance was curious; for though Major PALMER, said he, has not yet asked any thing, I observe it is the custom of the English gentlemen constantly to ask for something from me before they go. This imputation on the English Mr. HASTINGS was most ready, most rejoiced, to countenance as a screen and shelter from his own abandoned profligacy; and therefore, at the very moment when he pocketed the extorted spoils of the *Nabob*, with his usual grave hypocrisy, and cant, 'Go,' he said, 'to the English gentlemen; go, you oppressive rascals, go from this worthy unhappy man whom *you* have plundered, and leave him to *my* protection. You have robbed him; you have plundered him; you have taken advantage of his accumulated distresses; but please God, he shall in future be at rest, for I have promised him he shall never see the face of an Englishman again.' This, however, was the only part of the treaty which he even affected to fulfil; and, in all its other parts, we learn from himself, that, at the very mo-

ment he made it, he intended to deceive the *Nabob*; and accordingly he advised *general* instead of *partial* resumption, for the express purpose of defeating the first views of the *Nabob*; and instead of giving instant and unqualified assent to all the articles of the treaty, he perpetually qualified, explained, and varied them with new diminutions and reservations. Mr. SHERIDAN called upon gentlemen to say, if there was any theory in MACHIAVEL, any treachery upon record, if they had ever heard of any cold Italian fraud which could in any degree be put in comparison with the disgusting hypocrisy, and unequalled baseness which Mr. HASTINGS had shewn on that occasion?"

After having stated this complicated infamy in terms of the severest reprehension, Mr. SHERIDAN proceeded to observe, "that he recollected to have heard it advanced by some of those admirers of Mr. HASTINGS, who were not so implicit as to give unqualified applause to his crimes, that they found an apology for the atrocity of them in the greatness of his mind. To estimate the solidity of such a defence, it would be sufficient merely to consider in what consisted this prepossessing distinction, this captivating characteristic of greatness of mind. Is it not solely to be traced in great actions, directed to great ends? In them, and them alone, we are to search for true estimable magnanimity; to them only can we justly affix the splendid title and honours of real greatness. There was indeed another species of greatness, which displayed itself in boldly conceiving a bad measure, and undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. But had Mr. HASTINGS the merit of exhibiting either of these descriptions of greatness; even of the latter? He saw nothing great, nothing magnanimous, nothing open, nothing direct in his measures, or in his mind. On the contrary, he had too often pursued the worst objects by the worst means. His course was an eternal deviation from recti-

tude. He either tyrannized or deceived; and was by turns a DIONYSIUS and a SCAPIN. As well might the writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the swift directness of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. HASTING's's ambition to the simple steadiness of genuine magnanimity. In *his* mind all was shuffling, ambiguous, dark, insidious, and little; nothing simple, nothing unmixed, all affected plainness, and actual dissimulation. A heterogeneous mass of contradictory qualities, with nothing great but his crimes, and even those contrasted by the littleness of his motive, which at once denoted both his baseness and his meanness; and marked him for a traitor, and a trickster; nay in his stile and writing, there was the same mixture of vicious contrarieties. The most groveling ideas he conveyed in the most inflated language, giving mock consequence to low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics; so that his compositions disgusted the mind's taste as much as his actions excited the soul's abhorrence. Indeed, this mixture of character seemed by some unaccountable, but inherent quality, to be appropriated, though in inferior degrees, to every thing that concerned his employers. He remembered to have heard an honorable and learned gentleman (Mr. DUNDAS) remark, that there was something in the first frame and constitution of the company, which extended the sordid principles of their origin over all their successive operations, connecting with their civil policy, and even with their boldest achievements, the meanness of a pedlar, and the profligacy of pirates. Alike in the political and the military line could be observed *Auctioneering Ambassadors* and *Trading Generals*. And thus we saw a revolution brought about by *affidavits*; an army employed in *executing an arrest*; a town besieged on *a note of hand*; a Prince dethroned for *the balance of an account*. Thus it was they exhibited a government, which united the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre, and the lit-

the *traffic of a merchant's counting house*; wielding a truncheon with one hand, and *picking a pocket with the other*."—Mr. SHERIDAN now went into a long statement to shew the various irrefragable proofs exhibited in the minutes of the Bengal council, of the falsity of the charge, viz. that the *Begums* were the ancient disturbers of the government. And equally to prove that the second charge also (namely that the *Begums* had incited the *Jaghiredars* to resist the *Nabob*) was no less untrue; it being substantiated in evidence that not one of the *Jaghiredars* *did* resist.

Mr. SHERIDAN maintained, "that it was incontrovertible that the *Begums* were not concerned either in the rebellion of *Butbudder*, or the insurrection at *Benares*, nor did Mr. HASTINGS ever once *seriously* believe them to be guilty. Their *treasures* were their *treasons*, and ASOPHUT DOWLAH thought like an unwise prince, when he blamed his father for leaving him so little wealth. His father, SHUJAH UL DOWLAH acted wisely in leaving his son with no temptation about him, to invite acts of violence from the rapacious. He cloathed him with poverty as with a shield, and armed him with necessity as with a sword.

"The third charge was equally false. Did they resist the resumption of their own *Jaghiredars*? Though if they *had* resisted, he contended, that there would have been no crime; for those *Jaghires* were by solemn treaty confirmed to them; but, on the contrary, there was not one syllable of charge against them. The *Nabob* himself, with all the load of obloquy which he incurred, never imputed to them the crime of stirring up an opposition to his authority.

"To prove the falsehood of the whole of this charge, and to shew that Mr. HASTINGS originally projected the plunder, that he threw the odium in the first instance on the *Nabob*, that he imputed the crimes to them before he

had received one of the rumours which he afterwards manufactured into affidavits, Mr. SHERIDAN recommended "a particular attention to dates;" and he deduced from the papers these facts, "that the first idea was started by Mr. HASTINGS on the 15th of November 1781; that Mr. MIDDLETON communicated it to the *Nabob*, and procured from him a formal proposition on the 2d of December; that on the first of December Mr. HASTINGS wrote a letter to Mr. MIDDLETON, confirming the first suggestion made through Sir ELIJAH, which letter came into the hands of Mr. MIDDLETON on the 6th of December." He stated all the circumstances of the pains taken by Mr. MIDDLETON to bring the *Nabob* at length to issue the *Parwannas*, and coupled this with the extraordinary minute written by Mr. HASTINGS, on his return to Calcutta where he stated the resistance of the *Begums* to the execution of the resumption on the 7th of January 1782, as the cause of the measure in November 1781. Mr. SHERIDAN then proceeded to prove, that the *Begums* were by their condition, their age, and their infirmities, almost the only two souls in India who could not have a thought of distressing that government, by which alone they could hope to be protected; and that to charge them with a design to depose their nearest and dearest relation was equally absurd. He did not endeavour to do this from any idea, that because there was no motive for the offences imputed to these women, it was therefore a necessary consequence, that such imputations were false. He was not to learn, that there was such a crime as wanton, unprovoked wickedness. Those who entertained doubts on this point need only give themselves the trouble of reading the administration of Mr. HASTINGS. But, as to the immediate case, the documents on the table would bear incontrovertible testimony that insurrections had constantly taken place in *Oude*. To ascribe it to the *Begums* was wandering even beyond the improbabilities of

fiction. It were not less absurd to affirm, that famine would not have pinched, nor thirst have parched, nor extermination have depopulated—but for the interference of these old women. To use a strong expression of Mr. HASTINGS on another occasion, “The good which those women did was certain, the ill precarious.” But Mr. HASTINGS had found it more suitable to his purpose to reverse the proposition; yet wanting a motive for his rapacity, he could find it only in fiction. The simple fact was, “their treasure was their treason.” But, “they complained of the injustice.” GOD OF HEAVEN! had they not a right to complain! After a solemn treaty violated, plundered of all their property, and on the eve of the last extremity of wretchedness, were they to be deprived of the last resource of impotent wretchedness, complaint and lamentation! Was it a crime that they should croud together in fluttering trepidation, like a flock of resistless birds on seeing the felon kite, who, having darted at one devoted bird, and missed his aim, singled out a new object, and was springing on his prey with redoubled vigor in his wing, and keener vengeance in his eye! The fact with Mr. HASTINGS was precisely this:—Having failed in the case of CHEIT SING, he saw his fate; he felt the necessity of procuring a sum of money some where, for he knew *that* to be the never-failing receipt to make his peace with the Directors at home. Such, Mr. SHERIDAN added, were the true substantial motives of the horrid excesses perpetrated against the *Begums*!—Excesses, in every part of the description of which, he felt himself accompanied by the vigorous support of most unanswerable evidence; and upon *this* test would he place his whole cause: let gentlemen lay their hands upon their hearts, and with truth issuing, in all its purity, from their lips, solemnly declare, whether they *were*, or *were not* convinced that the *real* spring of the conduct of Mr. HASTINGS, far from being a desire to crush a rebellion, (and ideal fabulous re-

bellion !) was a malignantly rapacious determination to seize, with lawless hands, upon the treasures of devoted, miserable, yet unoffending victims ?

Mr. SHERIDAN now adverted to the affidavit made by Mr. MIDDLETON ; and after stating how futile were the grounds upon which he had, to the satisfaction of his conscience, proceeded to the utmost extremity of violence against the *Begums*, he exclaimed, " The GOD OF JUSTICE forbid that any man in this House should make up his mind to *accuse* Mr. HASTINGS on the ground which Mr. MIDDLETON took for *condemning* the *Begums* ; or to pass a verdict of guilty for the most trivial misdemeanor against the poorest wretch that ever had existed !—He then revised and animadverted on the affidavits of Colonel HANNAY, Colonel GORDON, Major MAC DONALD, Major WILLIAMS, and others. Major WILLIAMS, among the strange reports that chiefly filled these affidavits, stated one that *he* had heard—namely, that 50 British troops, watching 200 prisoners, had been surrounded by 6000 of the enemy, and relieved by the approach of *nine* men. And of such extraordinary hearsay evidence were most of the depositions composed. Considering therefore the character given by Mr. HASTINGS to the British army in OUDE, " that they manifested a rage for rapacity and speculation," it was extraordinary that there were no instances of stouter swearing. But as for Colonel GORDON, he afforded a flagrantly conspicuous proof of the *grateful spirit and temper* of affidavits designed to plunge these wretched women in irretrievable ruin. Colonel GOROM was, just before *not merely released from danger*, but *preserved from imminent death* by the very person whose accuser he thought fit to become ; and yet, *incredible* as it may appear, even at the expiration of two little days from his deliverance, he deposes against the distressed and unfortunate woman, who had become his *saviour*, and *only upon hearsay evidence* accuses her of crimes and rebellion.

GREAT GOD OF JUSTICE !" (exclaimed Mr. SHERIDAN), canst THOU from thy eternal throne look down upon such premeditated turpitude of heart, and not fix some mark of dreadful vengeance upon the perpetrators ? Of Mr. MAC DONALD, he said that he liked not the memory which remembered things better at the end of five years than at the time, unless there might be something so relaxing in the climate of India, and so affecting the memory as well as the nerves, "the soft figures melting away," and the images of immediate action instantaneously dissolving, men must return to their native air of England, to brace up the mind as well as the body, and have their memories, like their sinews, re-strung."

Having painted the loose quality of the affidavits, he said, "that he must pause a moment, and particularly address himself to one description of gentlemen, those of the learned profession, within those walls. They saw that that house was the path to fortune in their profession ; that they might soon expect that some of them were to be called to a dignified situation, where the great and important trust would be reposed in them of protecting the lives and fortunes of their fellow subjects. One right honorable and learned gentleman, in particular (Sir LLOYD KENYON) if rumour spoke right, might suddenly be called to succeed that great and venerable character, who long had shone the brightest luminary of his profession, whose pure and steady light was clear even to its latest moment, but whose last beam must now be too soon extinguished. That he would ask the supposed successor of lord MANSFIELD, to calmly reflect on these extraordinary depositions, and solemnly to declare, whether the mass of affidavits taken at Lucknow would be received by him as evidence to convict the lowest object in this country ? If he said it would, he declared to God he would sit down, and not add a syllable more to the too

long trespass which he had made on the patience of the committee."

Mr. SHERIDAN went farther into the exposure of the evidence, into the comparison of dates, and the subsequent circumstances, in order to prove that all the enormous consequences which followed from the resumption, in the capacity of the women, and the imprisonment and cruelties practised on their people, were solely to be ascribed and to be imputed to Mr. HASTINGS. After stating the miseries which the women suffered, he said, "that Mr. HASTINGS had once remarked, that a mind touched with superstition might have contemplated the fate of the *Rohillas* with peculiar impressions. But if indeed the mind of Mr. HASTINGS could yield to superstitious imagination; if *his* fancy could suffer any disturbance, and, even in vision, image forth the proud spirit of SUJAH DOWLAH, looking down upon the ruin and devastation of his family, and beholding that palace, which Mr. HASTINGS had first wrested from his hand, and afterwards restored, plundered by that very army with which he himself had vanquished the Mahrattas; seizing on the very plunder which he had ravaged from the *Rohillas*; that MIDDLETON, who had been engaged in managing the previous violations, most busy to perpetrate the last; that very HASTINGS whom, on his death-bed, he had left the guardian of his wife, and mother, and family, turning all those dear relations, the objects of his solemn trust, forth to the merciless seasons, and to a more merciless soldiery. A mind touched with superstition must, indeed, have cherished such a contemplation with peculiar impressions. That Mr. HASTINGS was regularly acquainted with all these enormities committed on the *Begums*, there was the clearest proof; it was true that MIDDLETON was rebuked for not being more exact. He did not, perhaps, descend to the detail; he did not give him an account of the number of groans

which were heaved ; of the quantity of tears which were shed ; of the weight of the fetters ; or of the depth of the dungeons ; but he communicated every step which he took to accomplish the base and unwarrantable end. He told him, that to save appearances they must use the name of the *Nabob*, and that they need go no farther than was absolutely necessary. This he might venture to say, without being suspected by Mr. HASTINGS of too severe a morality.

The Governor General, also, endeavoured to throw a share of the guilt on the council, although Mr. WHEELER had never taken any share, and Mr. MACPHERSON had not arrived in India when the scene began."

After contending, that he had shrunk from the inquiry ordered by the court of Directors, under a new and pompous doctrine, that the majesty of justice was to be approached with supplication, and was not to degrade itself by hunting for crimes, forgetting the infamous employment to which he had appointed an English Chief Justice, to hunt for criminal charges against innocent, defenceless women, Mr. SHERIDAN said, " he trusted that that House would vindicate the insulted character of justice ; that they would demonstrate its true quality, essence, and purposes : they would demonstrate it to be, in the case of Mr. HASTINGS, active, inquisitive, and avenging."

Mr. SHERIDAN remarked, " that he heard of factions, and parties in that House, and knew they existed. There was scarcely a subject upon which they were not broken and divided into sects. The prerogative of the crown found its advocates among the representatives of the people. The privileges of the people found opponents even in the House of Commons itself. Habits, connections, parties, all led to diversity of opinion. But when inhumanity presented itself to their observations, it found no division among them ; they attacked it as their common enemy ; and, as if the character of this land was involved

in their zeal for its ruin, they left it not till it was completely overthrown. It was not given to that House, to behold the objects of their compassion and benevolence in the present extensive consideration, as it was to the officers it relieved, and who so feelingly describe the extatic emotions of gratitude in the instant of deliverance. They could not behold the workings of the heart, the quivering lips, the trickling tears, the loud and yet tremulous joys of the millions whom their vote of this night would for ever save from the cruelty of corrupted power.—But though they could not directly see the effect, was not the true enjoyment of their benevolence increased by the blessing being conferred unseen? Would not the omnipotence of Britain be demonstrated to the wonder of nations, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, and saving by its *fiat* distant millions from destruction? And would the blessings of the people thus saved dissipate in empty air? No! If I may dare to use the figure, we shall constitute heaven itself our proxy, to receive for us the blessings of their pious gratitude, and the prayers of their thanksgiving. It is with confidence, therefore, Sir, that I move you on this charge,

“That WARREN HASTINGS be impeached.”

But however justly admired this speech was, Mr. SHERIDAN is allowed to have surpassed himself in summing up the same charge before the lords in June 1788. He resumed, or rather continued the subject for four days with a vigor of genius which seemed to derive increasing energy from unabated exertion. After this pause on the second day (June 5th) when the high Court of Parliament had adjourned from Westminster Hall, and the commons were assembled in their own chamber, the debate which ensued afforded Mr. BURKE an opportunity of paying him the following highly-finished, but well-deserved compliment.

“ He has this day surprised the thousands, who hung with rapture on his accents, by such an array of talents, such an exhibition of capacity, such a display of powers, as are unparalleled in the annals of oratory ; a display that reflected the highest honor upon himself, lustre upon letters, renown upon parliament, glory upon the country. Of all species of rhetoric, of every kind of eloquence, that has been witnessed, or recorded, either in ancient, or modern times ; whatever the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, the solidity of the judgment seat, and the sacred morality of the pulpit have hitherto furnished ; nothing has surpassed, nothing has equalled what we have this day heard in Westminster Hall. No holy seer of religion, no sage, no statesman, no orator, no man of any literary description whatever, has come up, in the one instance, to the pure sentiments of morality, or in the other, to that of variety of knowledge, force of imagination, propriety and vivacity of allusion, beauty and elegance of diction, strength and copiousness of stile, pathos and sublimity of conception, to which we have this day listened with ardor and admiration. From poetry up to eloquence, there is not a species of composition of which a complete and perfect specimen might not, from that single speech, be culled and collected.”

Next in consequence, and next also in the general opinion of delinquency to Mr. HASTINGS was Sir ELIJAH IMPEY, Chief Justice of the supreme court, established by the regulating act in 1773, against whom six articles of impeachment (including the murder of NUNDCOMAR) were exhibited by Sir GILBERT ELLIOT [now lord MINTO] on the 12th of December 1787.

He began his speech with lamenting “ that the first time in which he had occasion to call the attention of the House of Commons in the present parliament, he should stand in the unpopular and disagreeable character of an accuser.

Those who knew him best, and who were acquainted with the complexion of his mind, and its habits, would be able to estimate the discomfort that he felt under such a predicament; and at the same time would, he trusted, do him the honor to bear testimony to his heart, that such a task was highly incompatible with his natural feelings, and directly contrary to his common conduct. Instead of standing up there, as the accuser of any man, to gratify his natural disposition, he could have wished that it had fallen to his lot to appeal to the House in favor of distinguished merit, and to call on their gratitude and justice for rewards of services honorably performed. "But," said Sir GILBERT, "next to the pleasant duty of bestowing honors on great and distinguished men, who, having been invested by their country with high power, have exercised it with exemplary moderation, and who, being intrusted with the lives and properties of their fellow-creatures, have preserved them against outrage and oppression, is the necessary, though painful task of drawing down the vengeance of parliament on the head of a servant, whose pride stretched his power into tyranny, and whose avarice perverted his trust into plunder.

"On this ground, Sir GILBERT begged of gentlemen to consider, that if he that day stood up to accuse one person of high crimes and misdemeanors, he, at the same time, presented himself an advocate for oppressed millions; and they would consider also, that in redressing the grievances of nations, in preserving the weak against the violence and rapine of the strong, in administering justice with integrity themselves, and in taking care that it should be administered by others, consisted the grandest and most enviable distinctions of a powerful and enlightened senate. That the House of Commons had manifested their honorable determination that every subject of the extended empire of Britain should partake of the purity of its system,

as to the protection and equality of its laws ; and that no officer, however highly endowed with power, should dare to outrage his fellow subjects by acts of turpitude and cruelty, was a truth which cheered and supported him in the arduous undertaking which he had assumed ; and it gave him much confidence and comfort, that the highest authorities in that House had shewn, they were disposed to join cordially in the general determination of the House. He undoubtedly had need of much indulgence. It might be said, that he had not been able to avail himself of any particular opportunities of seeing the transactions in India. " I certainly have not seen them with my own eyes, but," continued Sir GILBERT, " for several years past, the principal part of my time and labor has been devoted to the study and contemplation of the affairs of India ; and I do not hesitate to say, that poor as my abilities are, unfortunate as it is for the task that it has fallen into my hands, I am convinced that if the House will enter on the inquiry, they will find that the person, whom I have accused, has been guilty of the most scandalous enormities ; that many millions of people, to whom he was sent to administer law, have been oppressed, and plundered under its color ; that being sent with the power of making them know and feel the blessings of the pure and equitable system which the legislature of England had in its wisdom and benevolence devised for their protection, he perverted it to the most scandalous purposes of tyranny ; and thus has alienated the hearts of the people of India, and has stained the name of Britain. In confidence that these things will all be made evident in the course of the inquiry, I am bold enough to stand up, and charge Sir ELIJAH IMPEY with high crimes and misdemeanors committed in India."

Before Sir GILBERT entered upon the detail of those crimes, he made a very modest yet forcible appeal to both sides of the House, on the known purity and disinterestedness of his views. " It was particularly grateful to him,

he confessed, that he could not even be suspected of party motives. There could be no faction involved in this prosecution ; for the protection of the weak, and the punishment of the guilty, did not belong exclusively to any side of the House. Besides, by a little attention to facts, it would be found that no one side or party could possibly lay claim singly to this charge, nor could it affect any other party. In the year 1774, Sir ELIJAH IMPEY went out to Bengal ; the year 1775 had not elapsed before a formal and serious complaint was preferred against him for mal-administration of his powers, and for having perverted the functions of the supreme court to purposes of scandalous tyranny and abuse. Every year afterwards brought similar charges against him, so that not only the court of directors, but that House had thought fit to recal him from his high office ; and full five years ago he stood on the records of that House as a public culprit. This would prove that in this charge there was nothing hostile to any party. Sir ELIJAH IMPEY was not a member ; and he knew of no party in that House who had reason to assert, that there was any factious motive at the bottom, or that he stood in any other light than of a voluntary agent for many millions of oppressed and outraged fellow-beings. He trusted that, in the prosecution of this business, it would always be present to the minds of gentlemen, and he begged leave to assume it as a fundamental principle ; *that our fellow-subjects in India were entitled, as well as ourselves, to the enjoyment of fair and equal justice ; and the code of laws which had been devised for their protection, should be administered with purity and impartiality.* It was certainly as easy to make laws for the people of India, as for the people of England, the difficulty was in their not being executed as well.

“ In England,” said Sir GILBERT, “ the arm of justice is under the immediate eye of the legislature that made the law ; and egregious abuses can neither escape

instantaneous notice, nor instantaneous correction. But it is not so with the course of justice in a place so remote as India. Much must be left to the purity, the integrity, the moderation of those persons who are entrusted with its powers; and all that the legislature can preserve is the power of exemplary punishment on the conviction of enormous abuse. Perhaps nothing is so truly abhorrent to the heart of man; nothing so deserving the rigor of national justice, as a corrupt administration of law. It is such an instrument in the hands of a bad and profligate man as to make the heart shudder at the uses to which it may be applied; and therefore do the crimes of a judge, more perhaps than any other species of delinquency, call for the vengeance of a nation."

Sir GILBERT now proceeded to state the nature of the case, on which the prosecution was to be founded. He related the circumstances of the act passed in 1773, for the establishment of a supreme court of judicature in Bengal, and the nature and extent of the powers committed to the judges. From thence he went to the appointment of Sir ELIJAH IMPEY, and the almost instantaneous use that had been made of his powers. "That these were fit subjects for the attention of that House it would not be necessary for him to take pains to elucidate; and he trusted that the current language which had been held on the first institution of the Indian code, and the supreme court, would not prevent gentlemen from seriously entering into this important investigation. He knew that the institution had been called a *law job*—an establishment intended as a colony for the bar in Westminster-hall by which young adventurers in law, as well as politics, were to carry their talents to the Indian field, and by which, in due process of time, that House was to behold a learned, as well as a lay squad from Bengal. All this he trusted, would be thrown totally out of the mind of

gentlemen ; for it was highly inconsistent with the dignity of parliament to imagine, that a solemn institution of law, by which many millions of people were to have the blessings of justice, or the miseries of the perversion of it, could ever have originated in so base a motive as a *job*. Much less, he trusted, would it be imagined, that this prosecution brought disgrace and ignominy on a profession, which, when it was dignified by truth and integrity, was the source of the greatest honor to its members, as well as of the greatest good to the community. He knew that the bar of England, distinguished as it was for purity and honor, felt becoming indignation at the enormities committed by the person whom he now arraigned. Participating in their feelings, and equally solicitous for the vindication of the bar, he felt it so much the more his duty, by the condign prosecution of this unworthy man, to justify a profession to which he had once the honor to belong."

Sir GILBERT next observed " that he had taken pains to arrange and prepare for the inspection of the House, the whole subject matter of the complaint, which he intended to make against Sir ELIJAH, and it was detailed in papers which he held in his hand. He thought it more advisable for him to give in this complaint in writing and to move that the papers should be submitted to a committee, than to trust to any brief and imperfect statement which he might be able, as a part of his speech, to make from them. The weight of the charges depended so much on the detail of the functions of the court, and of the evident motives by which Sir ELIJAH was influenced, and they were in their connection so related and dependent on each other, that much of their strength would be lost by the few extracts that might be made by him ; nor was it necessary in that stage to instance the particular enormities which constituted the foundation of the charges. The House had been so long accustomed to

hear and to speak on these topics, that they were not new to them; and it was by no means his wish to influence them by needless appeals to their humanity. The time would come, when the discussion of the crimes of this man must awaken every abhorrent feeling of their hearts. Mean while he would only state, that,

“ His first charge related to the melancholy case of the *Rajah NUNCOMAR*. ”

“ The next was Sir ELIJAH IMPEY’s conduct in the Patna cause.

“ The third was the illegal extension of the jurisdiction of the court.

“ The fourth was the *Cossijurah* cause.

“ The fifth respected Sir ELIJAH’s acceptance of the office, known by the name of the *Sudder Dewannee Adau-let*, with an enormous salary annexed, in direct disobedience to the act by which he held the place of supreme judge; and

“ The last was founded on the affidavits which he took at Lucknow, and the scandalous prostitution of his high authority in that instance.

“ From these,” said Sir GILBERT, “ the House will perceive that the charges are heavy indeed. They will see that, by the first, I accuse Sir ELIJAH IMPEY of *wilful and deliberate murder*, committed on the body of a *rajah*, in direct violation of the laws of his country. In doing this, I certainly do not mean to subject him to the trial prescribed by the laws for that crime; but to point it out as a part of the impeachment for high crimes and misdemeanors. By the other charges, I accuse him of *gross corruption*, of *positive injustice*, of *direct disobedience*; of *intentional violation* of the acts under which he held his powers; and in the last of having *suborned evidence*, and given to falsehood the sanctity of an affidavit. Falsehood in the administration of an oath by a judge is like blasphemy in the mouth of a churchman, and is of a

quality so heinous and offensive as to call for the most exemplary correction."

Having thus briefly enumerated the heads of his articles of charge, Sir GILBERT, in a strain of becoming respect, informed the House, "that he would not take up a moment more of its time. The papers might be submitted to a committee, who would be able immediately, or soon after the recess, to make their report: and in the mean time he should conclude with moving,

"That his complaint against Sir ELIJAH IMPEY, charging him with high crimes and misdemeanors in India, should be received and laid on the table."

This motion being seconded, and put, was unanimously agreed to. The charges were also ordered to be printed for the use of the members, and the matters of allegation being deemed of sufficient weight and importance, they were referred to the consideration of a committee of the whole House. In all the subsequent stages of the business, the speeches of Sir GILBERT were characterized by so much ability, so much temper, so much prudence, such a laborious investigation, such ingenuity of argument and pertinence of remark, such regular and perspicuous arrangement, such masterly management, and such an happy and forcible combination of parts, as must have produced on every unbiassed mind the most convincing effect. In his description of the horrid tragedy, in which Sir ELIJAH had been the prime agent, he made every hearer shudder. Having spoken of the ghost of NUNCOMAR, as visiting Sir ELIJAH, he concluded with these words, "The blood of the murdered *rajah* is on all our heads! the cry, the clamor of blood is still ringing in our ears, and bursting our walls for vengeance: to your justice, therefore, I commit the culprit: deal with him as he deserves."

A majority of eighteen, however, did not think that there was ground for Sir ELIJAH's impeachment.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE REGENCY.

SOON after the prorogation of parliament in July 1788, the King, who had been for some time rather indisposed, was advised by his physicians to try the waters of Cheltenham; and though, during his visit and residence there, his health appeared greatly established, yet on his return to Windsor, late in the summer, his illness returned with new and alarming symptoms. By the end of October, it could no longer be concealed, that the malady of the King was a nature peculiarly afflictive and dreadful. A mental derangement had taken place, which rendered him totally incapable of public business. Parliament having met on the 10th of November according to their prorogation, the state of the King's health was formally notified to them, and an adjournment of fourteen days was recommended, at the end of which term, if the King's illness should unhappily continue, it would be incumbent on them to enter on the immediate consideration of the state of public affairs. Upon the re-assembling of parliament, on the 4th of December, a report of the board of Privy Council was presented to the two Houses, containing an exact examination of the Royal Physicians; and it was properly suggested, that, considering the extreme delicacy of the subject, and the dignity of the person concerned, parliament would do well to rest satisfied without any more direct and express information, especially as the examinations of counsel had been taken upon oath, which the House of Commons had no power to administer. Doubts, however, having been

started by Mr. Fox and his party whether parliament could in this momentous case dispense with that sort of evidence on which they had been accustomed to proceed, a committee of twenty-one persons in each House was appointed to examine and report the sentiments of the Royal Physicians. This report being laid upon the table of the House of Commons, on the 10th of December, Mr. PITT moved for the appointment of another committee, to inspect the journals for precedents of such proceedings as had been adopted in former instances, when the Sovereign authority was suspended by sickness, infirmity, or any other cause. Mr. Fox opposed the motion, on the ground of its being a total loss of time. "What were they going to search for? Not precedents upon their journals, not parliamentary precedents, but precedents in the history of England. He would be bold to say, nay they all knew, that the doing so would prove a loss of time, for, there existed no precedent whatever, that could bear upon the present case. The circumstance to be provided for did not depend upon their deliberations as a House of Parliament, that it rested elsewhere. There was then a person in the kingdom different from any other person that any existing precedents could refer to, an Heir Apparent of full age and capacity to exercise the Royal power. It behoved them therefore not to waste a moment unnecessarily, but to proceed with all becoming speed and all becoming diligence to restore the Sovereign power, and the exercise of the Royal authority. When the unfortunate situation of His Majesty was first made known to that House, by a presentation of the minute of the Privy Council, some gentlemen had expressed a doubt whether the House could make such a paper a ground of parliamentary proceedings. Mr. Fox reminded the House that he had gone farther, and declared he thought the report of the Privy Council was not an authentic document, nor such

as that House could make the ground of its proceedings. That defect had now been remedied, and the House was, in consequence of the regular examination which His Majesty's physicians had undergone before a committee of their own, in possession of the true state of the King's health. That being known to the House, and through them to the nation at large, he contended that it was then, and then only, the precise point of time for the House to decide, and that not a single moment ought to be lost. In his firm opinion, his Royal Highness the Prince of WALES had as clear, as express a right to assume the reins of government, and exercise the power of sovereignty, during the continuance of the illness and incapacity with which it had pleased God to afflict His Majesty, as in the case of His Majesty's having undergone a natural and perfect demise; and as to this right, which he conceived the Prince of WALES had, he was not himself to judge when he was entitled to exercise it; but the two Houses of Parliament, as the organs of the nation, were alone qualified to pronounce when the Prince ought to take possession of, and exercise, his right. He thought it candid, entertaining this opinion, to come forward fairly, and avow it at that instant; and, therefore, under such an idea, he conceived that as short a time as possible ought to intervene between the Prince of WALES's assuming the sovereignty, and the present moment. He justified the Prince's not making this his indubitable claim himself, by imputing his desire of waving the open advancement of it to his having been bred in those principles which had placed his illustrious house on the throne, and to his known reverence and regard for those principles, as the true fundamentals of our glorious constitution, in the maintenance of which his family had flourished with so much prosperity and happiness, as Sovereigns of the British empire. Hence it was, that His royal Highness chose rather to wait the decision of parliament, with a patient and due

deference to the constitution, than to urge a claim, that, he trusted, a majority of that House, and of the people at large admitted; and which, he was persuaded, could not be reasonably disputed. But, ought he to wait unnecessarily? Ought His royal Highness to wait while precedents were searched for, when it was known that none that bore upon the case which so nearly concerned him, existed? Take it for granted, the House agreed to the motion, and proceeded by their committee to search for precedents. What precedents did the wording of the motion point to? It spoke in general and indefinite language. Possibly it might mean parliamentary precedents, referring to such contingencies as the present. If that were its meaning, such words as 'Parliamentary precedents' ought to have been expressed in it. Mr. Fox remarked, that he should not oppose the motion, but he thought it his duty to say, that it was incumbent on the House to lose no time in restoring the third estate. His Royal Highness, he was convinced, must exercise the Royal prerogative during, and only during, His Majesty's illness. With regard to the examination of the physicians, he would not take up the time of the House with commenting on the particular answers and opinions of each. However the physicians might have delivered opinions, that might in the minds of some men, impress one turn of idea, and, in the minds of others, a very different turn of idea, three points were, he thought, undeniable inferences from the whole of their examinations, in which he had assisted above stairs. These three points formed the result, and must be the *substratum* on which that House would necessarily raise the superstructure, whatever it might be, that they should deem it expedient to erect. He took the three points to be these :

" 1st, That His Majesty was incapable of meeting his parliament, or proceeding to business.

“ 2dly, That there was a great prospect, and a strong probability, of his recovery.

“ 3dly, But that with respect to the point of time when that recovery would take place, they were left in absolute doubt and uncertainty.”

Upon this occasion, Mr. Fox said, “ that he could not avoid expressing his hopes that the House would agree with him, that these three points formed the true, fair, uncolored result of the examination of His Majesty’s physicians.” He recapitulated the general heads of his speech ; and, after repeating his willingness to accede to every proposition that was consistent with the due solemnity of their proceedings, upon so serious an occasion, and declaring that he did not impute any desire to create delay, or unnecessarily avoid despatch, to the right honorable gentleman who spoke last, added, “ that he certainly would not resist the motion, although he had thought it incumbent on him to give his opinion on the subject freely and unreservedly.”

Mr. PITT answered, “ that he must take liberty to observe, that the right honorable gentleman had thrown out an idea which, whatever he might generally have thought of him, as to his penetration and discernment, as to his acquaintance with the laws and general history of the country, and as to his knowledge of the theory of the constitution (however he might repeatedly have found occasion to differ with him in respect to his measures and opinions in practice under it) he defied all his ingenuity to support, upon any analogy of constitutional precedent, or to reconcile to the spirit and genius of the constitution itself. The doctrine advanced by the right honorable gentleman was itself, if any additional reason were necessary, the strongest and most unanswerable for appointing the committee he had moved for, that could possibly be given. If a claim of right was intimated (even though not formally) on the part of the Prince of WALES, to assum-

the government, it became of the utmost consequence to ascertain, from precedent and history, whether this claim was founded ; which, if it were, precluded the House from the possibility of all deliberation on the subject. In the mean time, he maintained, that it would appear, from every precedent, and from every page of our history, that to assert such a right in the Prince of WALES, or any one else, independent of the decision of the two Houses of parliament, was little less than "*treason to the constitution of the country.*" He said, " he did not mean then to enter into the discussion of that great and important point ; because a fit occasion for discussing it would soon afford both the right honorable gentleman and himself an ample opportunity of stating their sentiments upon it. In the mean time, he pledged himself to this assertion, that in the case of the interruption of the personal exercise of the Royal authority, without any previous lawful provision having been made for carrying on the government, it belonged to the other branches of the legislature, on the part of the nation at large, the body they represented, to provide, according to their discretion, for the temporary exercise of the Royal authority, in the name, and on the behalf of the Sovereign, in such manner as they should think requisite ; and that, unless by their decision, the Prince of WALES had no right (speaking of strict right) to assume the government, more than any other individual subject of the country. What Parliament ought to determine, was a question of discretion. However strong the arguments might be on that ground, in favor of the Prince of WALES, which he would not enter into at present, it did not affect the question of right ; because, neither the whole, nor any part, of the Royal authority could belong to him in the present circumstances, unless conferred by the Houses of Parliament.

" As to the right honorable gentleman's repeated enforcement of the Prince of WALES's claim, he admitted

that it was a claim entitled to most serious consideration ; and thence, must take the liberty of arguing, that it was the more necessary to learn how the House had acted in cases of similar exigency, and what had been the opinion of parliament on such occasions. He would not allow that no precedent analogous to an interruption of the personal exercise of the Royal authority could be found, although there might possibly not exist a precedent of an *Heir Apparent* in a state of majority during such an occurrence ; and in that case, he contended, that it devolved on the remaining branches of the legislature, on the part of the people of England, to exercise their discretion in providing a substitute."

Mr. PITT contended, " that in the mode in which the right honorable gentleman had treated the subject, a new question presented itself, and that of greater magnitude even than the question which was originally before them, as matter of necessary deliberation. The question now was, the question of their own rights, and it was become a doubt, and according to the right honorable gentleman's opinion, whether that House had, on this important occasion, a deliberative power. He wished, for the present, to wave the discussion of that momentous consideration ; but he declared that he would, at a fit opportunity, state his reasons for advising what step parliament ought to take in the present critical situation of the country, contenting himself with giving his contradiction to the right honorable gentleman's bold assertion, and pledging himself to maintain the opposite ground against a doctrine so irreconcilable to the spirit and genius of the constitution. If the report of the committee had not proved the necessity of the motion he had made, the right honorable gentleman had furnished the House with so strong an argument for inquiry, that if any doubt had existed, that doubt must vanish. Let it not, then, be imputed to him, that he offered the motion, with a view to create delay : indeed,

the right honorable gentleman had not made any such imputation. In fact, no imputation of that sort could be supported, since no longer time had been spent, after the first day of their meeting, than was absolutely necessary to ensure as full an attendance as the solemnity and seriousness of the occasion required ; since that time, every day had been spent in ascertaining the state of His Majesty's health, and now the necessity of the case was proved, it behoved them to meet it on the surest grounds. Let them proceed, therefore, to learn and ascertain their own rights ; let every man in that House, and every man in the nation, who might hear any report of what had passed in the House that day, consider, that on their future proceedings depended their own interests, and the interest and honor of a Sovereign, deservedly the idol of his people. Let not the House, therefore, rashly annihilate and annul the authority of Parliament, in which the existence of the constitution was so intimately indolved."

After some farther debate, the question on Mr. PITT's motion was put and agreed to.

CHAPTER XI.

COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH FRANCE.

THE House having, on the 12th of February 1787, resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of so much of His Majesty's speech as related to the treaty of commerce concluded with France, Mr. PITT expressed a confidence, that when the House considered the magnitude of the subject, they would not only forgive him for trespassing upon their patience with an extended investigation, but would encourage him in his attempts to throw all necessary lights upon its nature and its possible effects. Convinced that he could not enter into details without employing much time, he should on this account, avoid needlessly prolonging the hours of debate, by the introduction of any extraneous matter whatsoever. If the treaty should be found to comprehend principles hostile to the received notions and doctrines of British commerce, and that thereby a general spirit of objection and discontent had spread abroad over the country, he was assured that it would little avail him to stand up in that committee, and argue for the acceptance of a negotiation which was generally offensive. The committee would not be seduced, by any thing which he might be able to advance, from the exercise of their clear and independent judgments; and certainly they would not be bound in any degree to the confirmation of this treaty, unless, after the most deliberate and solemn discussion, they should perceive it supported by the most rational principles, and by the most incontrovertible policy; and so find-

ing it, declare their sense of it, by adopting the means necessary for carrying it into effect.

“ On this occasion, he should not hesitate again earnestly to contend, that the treaty, in its commercial aspect, had been between four and five months before the public, and it was on that ground that he had confidence in going into the committee, and commencing its discussion. For if, after remaining between four and five months in the hands of every manufacturer and merchant in the kingdom, after being freely discussed in various publications, it should turn out that no one complaint had been heard ; that no great manufacturing body of men had taken the alarm ; and that nothing whatever had happened to prevent the discussion, save the petition presented that day, praying for time, from a few manufacturers collected in a certain chamber of commerce, he should certainly think himself justified in calling the attention of the committee to the discussion. If even that very chamber, who thus presented the petition, did not at the same time state any reasons against the treaty, but leaned itself simply on the vague and unsatisfactory ground, that after four or five months they had not had time, he was sensible that gentlemen would not think it a substantial ground for delay ; after the expiration of such a period of time, it appeared that all upon which they had determined was to entertain doubts, and of course, avoid bringing forward an opinion upon the subject. But another transaction had been mentioned and coupled with this, he must say, in a very singular manner ; he meant the Irish propositions. Did the honorable gentleman (Mr. SHERIDAN) mean to insinuate that there was any analogy between this treaty and those propositions ? Surely he did not intend to conclude from that experience, that the manufacturers were a body of men slow to apprehend their own danger, or to communicate their apprehensions to parliament ; or did the honorable gentleman wish to keep the resemblance in another

way? Those propositions, after being canvassed, discussed, and debated, were at length, on the most solemn deliberation, and he thought with the most perfect wisdom, approved by the parliament of Great Britain, as a set of resolutions, salutary and political, for the basis of an intercourse. But those propositions, so evidently opposed by the manufacturers here, had in the end been rejected by another kingdom as injurious and inimical to her interests. Was this the part of the precedent which the honorable gentleman meant to select? But, in truth, there was no similarity. The manufacturers, who were in general not a little watchful of their interests, and he rejoiced that they were vigilant, had taken no alarm. The woollen trade, so properly dear to this country, had manifested no species of apprehension. The manufacturers of cambrics, of glass, the distillery, and other members and branches of our domestic trade, though, in fact, particularly affected by the treaty, had made no complaint, much less had they received any notices from the manufacturers, from the hardware, the pottery, and other branches, of any objection. If after four or five months nothing like an objection had been heard; and if at the same time gentlemen were sensible that in many parts of the country, many descriptions of men were now eagerly looking forward for the completion of the business, forming exclusive speculations on the foot of it, and all waiting in readiness and anxiety to avail themselves of the benefits, and with themselves greatly to benefit their country, he begged of gentlemen not to think that they rashly entered into the consideration of the subject. Under these circumstances, therefore, he felt himself justified in declaring, that a reference to the case of the Irish propositions, made more for his arguments, and against his opponents, than was perhaps suspected. While the propositions were agitating, and they were not surely more injurious than gentlemen would represent this treaty to be, the manufacturers of

the kingdom came forward to parliament; and at a time when they experienced every attention and indulgence from the House, exhibited themselves the most incontrovertible, and indeed, laudable proof, that, while they fancied themselves endangered, or saw their interests at state, they possessed the most unremitting vigilance in watching over their concerns, and at least a sufficient degree of firmness in maintaining their objections. There was not a body which thought itself concerned, but instantly took alarm, and joined in the general remonstrances. Was it not fair then to conclude, that if any such apprehensions at present existed, instead of supineness and negligence, they would apply to parliament again with redoubled earnestness? But so far were the public from entertaining any dislike, or even doubts, concerning the merits of this treaty, that from the very best information, he could assert, in the presence of many of the members from great commercial towns, that in most parts of the country they looked with sanguine wishes for the speedy ratification of it. Great and various were the objects of this treaty, but the resolutions which he should have the honor to propose that evening, would lie in a narrow compass, and be easily embraced. It was not his intention to draw the committee to any general resolution which should involve the measures necessary to be taken in future, nor need gentlemen be alarmed by the groundless idea of being committed by one question to all the important details necessary to the full establishment of the system. Several observations had been made respecting the navigation laws and maritime regulations, upon which, as they did not come within the scope of his motion to the committee, and more properly belonged to the prerogative and the executive government, he would forbear offering any remarks. He meant only to submit to them certain leading resolutions, tending merely to the commercial establishment, and they were

founded on the 6th and 11th articles of the treaty. The result of the resolutions was precisely this :

“ 1st. That the committee should agree, that all articles not enumerated and specified in the tariff should be importable into this country, on terms as favorable as those of the most countenanced nation, excepting always the power of preferring Portugal, under the provisions of the METHUEN treaty.

“ 2d. That if any future treaty should be made with any other foreign power, in any articles either mentioned or not mentioned in the present treaty, France shall be put on the same, or on as favorable terms as that power ; —and

“ 3dly. That all the articles enumerated and specified in the tariff shall be admitted into this country on the duties, and with the stipulations stated in the sixth article.”

“ He thus confined himself to the commercial part of the treaty ; nor was even all, which belonged to that part, comprehended in the scope of these resolutions.— It would be necessary for the committee to take into their consideration the relative state of the two kingdoms. On the first blush of the matter, he believed he might venture to assert it, as a fact generally admitted, that France had the advantage in the gift of soil and climate, and in the amount of her natural produce ; that, on the contrary, Great Britain was, on her part, as confessedly superior in her manufactures and artificial productions. Undoubtedly, in point of natural produce, France had greatly the advantage in this treaty :—her wines, brandies, oils, and vinegars, particularly the two former articles, were matters of such important value in her produce, as greatly and completely to destroy all idea of reciprocity as to natural produce :—we perhaps have nothing of that kind to put in competition, but simply the article of beer. But, on the contrary, was it not a fact as demonstrably clear, that Britain, in its turn, possessed some manufac-

tures exclusively her own, and that in others she had so completely the advantage of her neighbour, as to put competition to defiance? This then was the relative condition, and this the precise ground, on which it was imagined that a valuable correspondence and connection between the two might be established. Having each its own and distinct staple,—having each that which the other wanted; and not clashing in the great and leading lines of their respective riches, they were like two great traders in different branches; they might enter into a traffic which would prove mutually beneficial to them. Granting that a large quantity of their natural produce would be brought into this country, would any man say, that we should not send more cottons by the direct course now settled, than by the circuitous passages formerly used—more of our woollens, than while restricted in their importation to particular ports, and burthened under heavy duties? Would not more of our earthen ware, and other articles, which, under all the disadvantages that they formerly suffered, still, from their intrinsic superiority, force their way regularly into France, now be sent thither? And would not the aggregate of our manufactures be greatly and eminently benefitted in going to this market, loaded only with duties from twelve to ten, and in one instance with only 5 per cent? If the advantages in this respect were not so palpable and apparent as to strike and satisfy every mind interested in the business, would not the House have had very different petitions on their table than that presented this day? The fact was apparent. The article (sadlery) charged the most high in the tariff gave no alarm. The traders in this article, though charged with a duty of fifteen per cent. knew their superiority so well, that they cheerfully embraced the condition, and conceived that the liberty would be highly advantageous to them. A market of so many millions of people—a market so near and prompt—a market

of expeditious and certain return—of necessary and extensive consumption,—thus added to the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain, was an object which we ought to look up to with eager and satisfied ambition. To procure this, we certainly ought not to scruple to give liberal conditions. We ought not to hesitate, because this, which must be so greatly advantageous to us, must also have its benefit for them. It was a great boon procured on easy terms, and as such we ought to view it. It was not merely a consoling, but an exhilarating speculation to the mind of an Englishman, that, after the empire had been engaged in a competition the most arduous and imminent that ever threatened a nation—after struggling for its existence, still it maintained its rank and efficacy so firmly, that France, finding they could not shake her, now opened its arms, and offered a beneficial connection with her on easy, liberal, and advantageous terms.

“ We had agreed by this treaty to take from France, on small duties, the luxuries of her soil, which, however, the refinements of ourselves had converted into necessities. The wines of France were already so much in the possession of our markets, that, with all the high duties paid by us, they found the way to our tables. Was it then a serious injury to admit these luxuries on easier terms? The admission of them would not supplant the wines of Portugal, nor of Spain, but would supplant only an useless and pernicious manufacture in this country. He stated that the enormous increase of the import of French wines lately, and instanced the months of July and August, the two most unlikely months in the year, to shew the increase of this trade. The committee would not then perceive any great evil in admitting this article on easy terms. The next was brandy, and here it would be inquired whether the diminution of duty was an eligible measure. He believed they would also agree with

and France, because no such treaty had ever been formed, and because, on the contrary, commercial intercourses with her had always been injurious to England. This reasoning was completely fallacious, though it sounded largely. For, in the first place, we had not, during a very long series of years, experienced any commercial connection with France, and could not therefore form a rational estimate of its merits; and secondly, though it might be true, that a commercial intercourse founded on the treaty of Utrecht would have been injurious, it did not follow that this would prove the same; for at that time manufactures, in which we now excelled, had hardly existence, but were on the side of France, instead of being against her. The tariff did not then, as now, comprehend all the articles in which we comparatively excelled, but in addition to the produce of France, which at all times must be the same, she had the balance of manufactures also in her favor. At that period also, the prejudices of our manufacturers against France were in their rage, and corresponded with the party violence of the day in the reprobation of the measure; but so far was the parliament from entertaining the opinion of no treaty being otherwise than detrimental, which could be made with France, that they went up with an address to Her Majesty, praying her to renew commercial negotiations with the court of France. It was not correctly stated, that we had invariably considered it as our policy to resist all connection with France. She had been more jealous of us than we of her. Prohibitions began on the part of France, and we only retaliated in our own defence. These parts of his subject he felt it difficult to drop, without again adverting to the effect of this treaty on our revenue, which would almost exceed credibility, though it would cause an average reduction of 50 per cent. in every article of our book of rates. On French wines the reduction would be 10,000/. per annum; on

Portugal wines 170,000*l.* should the METHUEN treaty be continued ; and on brandy, a reduction of 20,000*l.* The surrender of revenue for great commercial purposes was a policy by no means unknown in the history of Great Britain ; but here we enjoyed the extraordinary advantage of having them returned to us in a three-fold rate, by extending and legalizing the importation of the articles. When it was considered that the increase must exceed the concession which we made, it would no longer be an argument that we cannot afford this reduction. Increase by means of reduction, he was obliged to confess, appeared once a paradox, but experience had now convinced us that it was more than practicable.

“ The simple question for the committee to consider, was, whether, if the situation of the two countries was changed in its relative aspect—if it was true, that at the treaty of Utrecht we had but little to send to France, and that we had now much to send them—that our manufactures were so confessedly superior as to dread no competition, and greatly to counterbalance the natural produce of France, we ought not to enter into the treaty ; or whether there was some preposterous and inscrutable, as well as fixed and eternal something between the two countries which must prevent them from ever forming any connection, or cherishing any species of amity ? Having decided on this point, the next business of the committee was to see how far this treaty would affect their commercial treaties with other powers. This naturally led him to Portugal ; and he must positively affirm, that there was nothing which prevented them from complying fully with the conditions of the METHUEN treaty, if the British legislature should find it right, by the conduct of Portugal, to maintain the full force of that treaty. By enlarging their market for wine, they neither infringed on the markets of Portugal, nor of Spain. It was not even pretended that the treaty could affect their connection with any

other powers. He contended, that it was not more necessary to view the effects of the treaty in its commercial operation, than as it might have an influence on the revenue. There would undoubtedly be a very considerable reduction of duties. It was a question however, whether this reduction would be attended with a proportionate loss to the revenue. On the subject of wines, it was certain that this reduction would not so operate; for if the METHUEN treaty was to be preserved, and he certainly thought, that nothing but the conduct of Portugal could make us harbour an idea of putting an end to it, there must be a defalcation from the subsisting duties on wine to the amount of 160 or 170,000*l.* a year. On brandy there also must be a loss, though a very small one, considering the probable increase of the legal importation—but there might be a diminution of the revenue to the amount of 20,000*l.* Taking this evil at the worst, a surrender of revenue for great commercial purposes was not contradictory to sound policy, nor established practice. It was happy for the nation that this defalcation would make no difference, because it did not interfere with the plan of applying the surplus of the revenue to the payment of the debt.

“ Previous to an examination of the treaty in its political aspect, he begged leave to trespass on the patience of the House, whilst he adverted to the report made to the general chamber of manufacturers—a report which would now form a part of his speech; but, however he should be sorry and ashamed, were the committee to mistake it as being actually a part of his speech. The House would please therefore to recollect, that this chamber of manufacturers had asked, “ what laws must be repealed, to make room for the French treaty ?” They needed not to suspend their opinions simply on this ground; they might have left the task of discovering these laws to parliament, unless they meant to take from them the trouble

of legislation. The enumeration which they had made was singular. They had found out that the alien's duty must be repealed. In confirmation of this, they had thought proper to observe, that besides the laws restraining exportation, there are many others which, in favor of our own manufactures, prohibit the importation of foreign goods, as the 4th EDWARD IV. Chap. 1. by which no cloths, wrought beyond sea, shall be brought into England, and sent to sale. That 3d EDWARD IV. Chap. 3. and 4. the 1st of RICHARD III. Chap. 12. the 7th of ELIZABETH, Chap. 7. the 13th and 14th CHARLES II. Chap. 13. contain a variety of prohibitions on the importation of a great number of articles in the woollen, iron, copper, and glass manufactures; every one of which laws must necessarily be repealed. And that it has also been proved by a law 1st RICHARD III. Chap. 9. and 32d HENRY VIII. Chap. 15. "That no alien shall sell by *retail*, nor take any lease of a house, or shop to trade in," which must by this treaty also be repealed, as the permission to sell by *retail* is not (as was in the treaty of Utrecht) excepted. And they add, that it may be proper to remark, that any relaxation of the laws, to prevent the clandestine landing of goods, will have a worse effect upon our manufacturers, than even a direct importation upon certain duties; and that by the free approach allowed to French vessels upon the coast, and the time given by the treaty to make entries, and to correct them when made, an alteration of the custom-house laws (made as well for the protection of fair trade as the collection of the revenue) must take place, from which they apprehend great mischiefs may ensue.

"Mr. PITT here remarked, that he believed a well-founded opinion prevailed in the learned profession, that the statutes of RICHARD III. and HENRY VIII. imposing that odious duty, were in fact no longer in existence. If this were not so, he was sure at least that the gentlemen on the other side of the House, whose liberal principles

he would always acknowledge, would not become advocates for the continuance of those odious penal statutes. In this enumeration also, they talked of a vast number of articles which would be clandestinely imported and exported—of the encouragement to smuggling by the re-approach to our shores, although the re-approach was pointedly confined to ships driven by stress of weather, and the danger of alteration of entries—and that by taking off the old prohibitions, their wool, their fullers' earth, nay their tools, utensils, and secrets, would be transmitted to the rival. He professed he could not divine the part of the treaty where this committee of manufacturers had discovered these dangers. He conceived that they were empowered to preserve all the prohibitions which they might think it wise to continue. He knew not of any possibility of sending the wool, the fullers' earth, or the tools of the manufacturers out of the kingdom. He went through the whole report of the committee, commenting on each passage, and opposing the ideas of the whole. That a set of manufacturers should neglect to consider the application of the treaty to themselves, while they wandered into the paths of legislation and government, did not look like that apprehension for their real interests which their terrors betrayed at the time of the Irish propositions. They indeed expressed their fears, should the tools and manufacturers of this country be imported to France; but upon that subject they may be quite at their ease, for there was not a word in the treaty to favour such a construction.

“ Considering the treaty in its political view, he should not hesitate to contend against the too frequently advanced doctrine, that France was, and must be, the unalterable enemy of Britain. His minded revolted from this position as monstrous and impossible. To suppose that any nation could be unalterably the enemy of another, was weak and childish. It had neither its foundation in

the experience of nations, nor in the history of man. It was a libel on the constitution of political societies, and supposed the existence of diabolical malice in the original frame of man. But these absurd tenets were taken up and propagated; nay, it was carried farther; it was said, that by this treaty, the British nation was about blindly to throw itself into the arms of this constant and uniform foe. Men reasoned as if this treaty was not only to extinguish all jealousy from our bosoms, but also completely to annihilate our means of defence; as if by the treaty we gave up so much of our army, so much of our marine; as if our commerce was to be abridged, our navigation lessened, our colonies to be cut off or to be rendered defenceless, and as if all the functions of the state were to be sunk in apathy. What ground was there for this train of reasoning? Did the treaty suppose that the interval of peace between the two countries would be so totally unemployed by us as to disable us from meeting France in the moment of war with our accustomed strength? Did it not much rather, by opening new sources of wealth, speak this forcible language, that the interval of peace, as it would enrich the nation, would also prove the means of enabling her to combat her enemy with more effect when the day of hostility should come? It did more than this; by promoting habits of friendly intercourse, and of mutual benefit, while it invigorated the resources of Britain, it made it less likely that she should have occasion to call forth those resources. It certainly had at least the happy tendency to made the two nations enter into more intimate communion with one another, to enter into the same views even of taste and manners; and while they were mutually benefited by the connection, and endeared to one another by the result of the common benefits, it gave a better chance for the preservation of harmony between them, while, so far from weakening, it strengthened their sinews for war. That we should not

be taken unprepared for war was a matter totally distinct from treaty. It depended in no degree on that circumstance, but simply and totally on the watchfulness and ability of the administration for the time being. He had heard of the invariable character of the French nation, and of the French cabinet ; her restless ambition, and her incessant enmity and designs against Britain ; and he noticed the particular instance of her interference in our late disputes, and of the result of her attack at that time. That France had, in that instance of our distress, interfered to crush us, was a truth over which he did not desire to throw even the slightest veil. Having premised that the provisions of the treaty would neither delude us into security, nor accomplish our reduction ; that, on the contrary, it would strengthen our hands, and whilst it did not diminish our means, would throw the prospect and the necessity of war at a very great distance ; friendly assurances, he added, were not always to be relied on, but although he thought France the aggressor in most of our former wars, yet her assurances and frankness during the present negotiation, were such, as, in his opinion might be confided in. What might be the projects which wild ambition might one day dictate, was beyond his penetration ; but, at present, the court of France was governed by maxims too prudent and political, not to consult its own safety and happiness beyond the ministerial aims of impracticable conquest. Oppressed as this nation was during the last war, by the most formidable combination for its destruction, yet had France very little to boast at the end of the contest, which should induce her again to enter deliberately into hostilities with this country. In spite of our misfortunes, our resistance must be admired, and in our defeats we gave proofs of our greatness, and almost inexhaustible resources ; which, perhaps, success would never shew us

"Duris ut illex tonsa bipennibus,

"Nigra feraci frondis in Algido.

"Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso

"Ducit opes animumque ferro."

Indeed, while he recollected the whole of that dreadful controversy, he could deduce arguments from it to reconcile the present conduct of France with more equitable and more candid principles of policy than gentlemen seemed willing to attribute to our rival. When France perceived that, in that dreadful contest, when with the enormous combination of power against us it might be truly said, that we were struggling for our existence, we not only saved our honor, but manifested the solid, and he might also be tempted to say, the inexhaustible resources of the land; reflecting that, though she had gained her object in dismembering our empire, she had done it an expense which had sunk herself in extreme embarrassment; and reflecting also, that such a combination of hostile power against us, without a single friend in Europe on our side, can never be imagined again to exist; "may I not," exclaimed Mr. PITT, "be led to cherish the idea, that, seeing the durable and steady character of our strength, and the inefficacy as well as the ruin of hostility, France would eagerly wish to try the benefits of an amicable connection with us? It was a singular line of argument which he had heard, and which he saw was also propagated out of doors, that the treaty would prove objectionable, if it should be found that, though advantageous to ourselves, it would be equally so to them. It was ridiculous to imagine that the French would consent to yield advantages without an idea of return; the treaty would be of benefit to them; but he did not hesitate to pronounce his firm opinion, even in the eyes of France, and pending the business, that though advantageous to her, it would be more so to us. The proof of this assertion was short and indubitable. She gained for her wines and other pro-

duce a great and opulent market ; we did the same, and to a much greater degree. She procured a market of eight millions of people, we a market of twenty-four millions. France gained this market for her produce, which employed in preparation but few hands, gave little encouragement to its navigation, and produced but little to the state. We gained this market for our manufactures, which employed many hundreds of thousands, and which, in collecting the materials from every corner of the world, advanced our maritime strength, and which, in all its combinations, and in every article and stage of its progress, contributed largely to the state. France could not gain the accession of 100,000*l.* to her revenue by the treaty ; but England must necessarily gain a million. This could easily be demonstrated. The high price of labor in England arose chiefly from the excise, and three-fifths of the price of labor were said to come into the Exchequer. The produce of France, on the contrary, was low in the staple, and less productive to the state in the process. Even the reduced duties were so proportionably high, that France could not send to us 500,000*l.* of brandies but we must gain cent. per cent. by the article. In this view, then, though France might gain, we must comparatively be so much more benefited, that we ought not to scruple to give her advantages ; and surely ought not to fear that this very disproportionate gain could be injurious to us in case of a future contest. It was in the nature and essence of an agreement between a manufacturing country and a country blessed with peculiar productions, that the advantages must terminate in favor of the former ; but it was particularly disposed and fitted for both the connections. Thus France was by the peculiar dispensation of Providence, gifted, perhaps, more than any other country upon earth, with what made life desirable, in point of soil, climate, and natural productions. It had the most fertile vineyards, and the richest harvests ; the greatest

luxuries of man were produced in it with little cost, and with moderate labor. Britain was not thus blessed by nature; but, on the contrary, it possessed, through the happy freedom of its constitution, and the equal security of its laws, an energy in its enterprise, and a stability in its exertions, which had gradually raised it to a state of commercial grandeur; and not being so bountifully gifted by heaven, it had recourse to labor and art, by which it had acquired the ability of supplying its neighbour with all the necessary embellishments of life in exchange for her natural luxuries. Thus standing with regard to each other, a friendly connection seemed to be pointed out between them, instead of the state of unalterable enmity, which was falsely said to be their true political feeling towards one another."

In conclusion, he remarked, "that with respect to political relation, this treaty at least, if it afforded us no benefits, brought us no disadvantages. It quieted no well-founded jealousy; it slackened no necessary exertion; it retarded no provident supply; but simply tended, while it increased our ability for war, to postpone the period of its approach. But on this day he had only to draw the attention of the House to objects merely commercial,—and he must again say, that he by no means wished to bind them by any resolution this night, to any general approbation of the measure. He should sit down after moving his first resolution; yet he begged to be understood, that he meant to move the others which he had mentioned."

Mr. PITT now moved:

"That in case either of the two high contracting parties shall think proper to establish prohibitions, or to augment the import duties upon any goods or merchandise of the growth or manufacture of the other, which are not specified in the tariff, such prohibitions or aug-

mentations shall be general, and shall comprehend the like goods and merchandises of the other most favored European nations, as well as those of either state; and in case either of the two contracting parties shall revoke the prohibitions, or diminish the duties, in favor of any other European nation, upon any goods or merchandise of its growth or manufacture, whether on importation, or exportation, such revocations, or diminutions shall be extended to the subjects of the other party, on condition that the latter shall grant to the subjects of the former the importation and exportation of the like goods and merchandises under the same duties; the cases reserved in the seventh article of the present treaty always excepted. That all articles of manufacture and commerce, not enumerated in the tariff, be admitted from France, on paying the same duties as the same articles pay on importation from the most favored nation."

Mr. Fox remarked, "that he felt himself impelled to rise, by a consciousness that it was now become his indispensable duty not to fail embracing the earliest opportunity of delivering his opinions concerning a point, of which the present aspect seemed certainly of all others the most detrimental to the policy, the revenue, and the commerce of this island. So impressed was he with this idea, that he should not hesitate to open his sentiments, with a declaration, that no former minister had ever labored to introduce a measure more prejudicial to the country than that which was the present object of parliamentary investigation. With regard to what the right honorable gentleman had observed respecting its political tendency to cement in bonds of peace and commerce the friendship of both countries, and that he conceived it not impossible, by these means, to destroy that enmity which had subsisted between the two nations, he must beg leave entirely to dissent. France was the inveterate and unalterable political enemy of Great Britain. No ties of af-

fection or mutual interest could possibly eradicate what was so deeply rooted in her constitution. What could demonstrate it more than the invariable system of her policy towards this island? Was not her whole conduct towards this country an unwearied and systematic series of measures, either distinguished for their sinister intrigue, or declared hostility? He did not mean to say this enmity arose from any vindictive principles; it was not that she adopted her measures for our annihilation, in remembrance of Cressy or Agincourt; no, her policy of diminishing our power and prosperity arises from her own inordinate ambition of universal monarchy; and thus are we her natural enemies. It is from us she fears the diminution of her powers to obtain this desirable object of her inordinate ambition. From us alone do the other powers of Europe hope for protection, to maintain that balance of power which can preserve their respective liberties for her encroachments. We are therefore not her foe from enmity, or ambition; we are only her enemy in her attempts to destroy that system of policy on which the other states of Europe must depend for their liberties as well as their existence. When she attempts encroachments on the barriers of European liberty, it is then Great Britain is her enemy, and no longer; and while this is the object of her ambition, so we shall ever remain; and when had we not reason to look upon France with this jealousy and circumspection? View the tenor of all our history. While she practised these political intrigues of ambition, we were always the only power able and ready to check, punish, and counteract her designs. From the period of HENRY VI. to CHARLES II. he acknowledged we did not feel this jealousy towards France. She was not during this time in a capacity to alarm any of the other powers of Europe with her ambitious encroachments. We had therefore no cause for the continuance of our exertions against her machinations and encroach-

ing hostilities. Such were the general principles on which Great Britain and France were naturally unalterable enemies. A variety of treaties would serve to prove, that it was the principle of each of them not to admit her to a participation of our commercial advantages, except during the reigns of the two STUARTS.

“ The House were not ignorant, that, in the treaty of Utrecht in the year 1713, which was as much the censure of that day as it has been decried ever since, the ministry, who had the entire affection, confidence, and reverence of the people and parliament, did attempt to enter into a commercial connection with France. But such was the policy of the Whig party, that very successfully for this country, by their exertions and opposition, they subverted the plan which would otherwise have been adopted, and would then have ruined the prosperity of this country, and destroyed the liberties most probably of every other in Europe. For had our powers been diminished we should not have possessed that strength which has ever been and must be their protection. This was similar to what had happened to the right honorable gentleman himself on a former occasion [the Irish propositions.] It was true, he admitted, according to what he [Mr. PITT] had observed, this parliament had not rejected them. But still they were rejected, and happily, he thought, for the interests of both countries. But in what manner was the question carried in that House in favor of the right honorable gentleman? Was it not from the confidence which they placed in the intentions of the minister, although they distrusted the consequences of his measures? Did not several gentlemen of very respectable ability, character, and property, say, when they gave their vote in favor of the Irish propositions, that it was a subject of so complex and intricate a nature, that they could not think themselves completely competent to decide; but that they gave their vote on the most unreserv-

ed confidence of the right honorable gentleman's intentions. Such we should expect would have been the conduct of that day; for never were a ministry higher in the trusts and estimation of the whole nation, as well as the parliament. So great was their attachment to this Tory administration, that even the man [the Duke of MARLBOROUGH] who had carried the character of the country to the highest exaltation of glorious conquest, was, in conformity to the sentiments of this ministry, degraded and dishonored. Is it not then an evidence incontrovertible of the idea which the nation had of the impolicy of entering into a commercial commerce with France, when they could thus reject a plan in its favor, proposed by a minister, to whom they gave such an implicit confidence, and of whom they entertained such an exalted opinion? And what indeed was the conduct of both countries in succeeding treaties. Among these might be observed several particulars relative to the *family compact* between the houses of Bourbon. By this compact an alliance had been formed, which seemed particularly a conjunction of power to diminish the growing vigor and prosperity of Great Britain. By that it was agreed, that no Englishman should have the same privilege in France, or Spain, as a Frenchman, or a Spaniard should have in them mutually.—This was therefore evidently to diminish the advantages which Great Britain formerly enjoyed in those nations, and to aggrandize the emoluments of their subjects respectively. But this disadvantage we soon controlled; for in the treaty of Paris, in the year 1763, we stipulated that an Englishman should be considered in France as a Spaniard, and in Spain as a Frenchman; and in the treaty of 1783 this object was still continued. Thus in both treaties particular care had been taken to restore to this country the privileges which they enjoyed in France and Spain, before the passing the *family compact*. But this 25th article of the compact was by the present

treaty restored to its former vigor. In this treaty between the French ministers, and the commercial plenipotentiary, Mr. EDEN, it was agreed that the 25th article of the family compact should be again restored. And as a compensation we had the reserve of lowering the duties of Portugal wines, in order to enable us to preserve the METHUEN treaty. But this was a reservation that could be considered no grant of France. We had already this power; we had therefore restored to France and Spain a power of excluding us from the advantages they granted to each other for the enjoyment of a privilege which we already possessed.

“ Mr. Fox, now adverting to the sentiments of Mr. PITT, in regard to the petition from the chamber of commerce, remarked, that the right honorable gentleman observed, that as a petition had been brought up to the House from some of the most respectable merchants not only in this country, but in Europe, which had not stated any precise objection to the treaty, that it was rather to be received as an approbation, than a remonstrance against the treaty. He did not recollect that the parties had forbore giving their opinions on the subject until more official information was laid before them, to empower them to decide. But were the modest sentiments of such gentlemen, whose names he must have heard read in the petition, to be treated with this interpretation? Did he not read there the names of Mr. WALKER, one of the greatest manufacturers in Europe in the cotton and fustian articles? Did he not read the names of MILLS and HEYWOOD, one of the greatest houses in the clothing trade in Leeds in Yorkshire? Surely when such men as these had signed a petition against any measure, their sentiments were to be regarded. And although they had not advanced any particular objections, from a desire to wait for complete information, yet their present petition, as against the operative principle of the bill, was certain-

ly an object worthy the right honourable gentleman's attention.

Much would it become the House seriously to contemplate the effect which this treaty might have on the revenues of the country. What were the advantages that ministry could possibly expect from this treaty? With regard to the prevention of smuggling, he did not conceive how the arguments the right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT] had used, could apply. He had said, with respect to the brandies, that what were formerly smuggled into this country would now come under the legal duty, and thus would the revenue receive all the advantages of which it was formerly defrauded. But how did this fact really stand? The duties on brandies made their importation to the merchant 7*s.* 6*d.* per gallon—this was 400 per cent. Would the right honorable gentleman therefore pretend to say, that when the duties on brandies were 400 per cent. in the first cost, that they would not be now smuggled in as great a proportion as they were formerly? They certainly would. For where there was such a temptation, there would smuggling always exist.—But, to prevent this smuggling of brandy, the right honorable gentleman had declared, that he had a plan to propose to effectuate it entirely. What was this plan? Did he mean to reduce the duties to 100 per cent? Would he lower the duties to 3*s.* 4*d.* per gallon? and if he did, what assurance could he give that they would not smuggle brandies into this country? But if he reduced the duties on brandies, the duties on rum must be reduced in proportion, otherwise the consumption of our colonial produce in the West Indies would be materially diminished. He was therefore assured, that he could not with any consistency of policy, or expediency, lower the duties beneath the present standard. If he did, he would risk the diminution of the revenue in one instance, and the diminution of our West India produce in the other.

Therefore he could not conceive in what particular smuggling would be diminished with regard to the exportation of brandies, under the stipulations of the present treaty.

“ As to the commercial part of the treaty, the first object that most materially claimed his attention was the woollen manufactory. It had been argued, that we had opened to ourselves a market, containing twenty-four millions of people, while France had only obtained from us a market of eight millions. But with respect to the number of persons in a market, he did not estimate the advantages to be derived on such a scale of computation. The advantages were to be estimated from the consumption of the nation's produce. The raw material, were it grown in the country, and then manufactured, was certainly the estimate of one nation's profit with another in a commercial intercourse. How was the situation of this with regard to our woollen manufactures? As far as the woollen articles, we might export to France, by virtue of this treaty, were composed of English wool, we should clearly have benefit. But as we used at least 350,000 lb. of Spanish wool in our manufactories of woollen cloths, we clearly lost this advantage of the raw material. And this was not all; for this 350,000 lb. when manufactured into cloth, was estimated by those most conversant in the trade, to amount to no less a sum than double, even to 700,000 lb. Thus such a value would be clearly to our disadvantage. And what yet more increased our loss was, that Spain might give France an opportunity of importing their wool under the sanction of the treaty, which restored to both France and Spain the privileges of the *family compact*. By this France would be able to manufacture this article, and afterwards serve us with the commodity which we before made ourselves. And as it was a species of cloth which our wool would not make, we should be obliged to purchase it from France, under the

disadvantage of their having the labour, and we the loss of the artificers, and they the emolument, and we the loss of the manufacture.

“ Thus, having shewn in what manner the advantages of reciprocity were to be estimated in this treaty, he proceeded to several other articles. Among these was the importation of brandies into this country. He had before manifested, that in no possible manner could this treaty diminish the smuggling of this article into the country. And now he meant to evince, that the revenue could not possibly be benefitted under the idea of a greater quantity of brandy being imported into the country. Six hundred thousand gallons were the estimate of the brandies imported here. But of this quantity only 160,000 gallons was the quantity annually imported from France. It was, therefore, evident that the rest must be chiefly imported from Spain, or some other countries on that part of the continent. Consequently, lowering the duties of what were imported from France could not increase the revenue; for, as what was imported from thence was evidently so disproportionate to what we imported from Spain and other countries, no increase of consumption in French brandies could possibly be expected. Unless the constitutions of the people could be altered, he believed a greater quantity could not be consumed than what was at present. He, therefore, could not conceive any advantages of revenue, or indeed commerce, to be derived from lowering the duties on this article. He then proceeded to the cotton manufactory. This, he said, was chiefly supported by the working of a raw material, of which no less a quantity than 17,000,000 lb. of wool cotton was used. But of this quantity half was imported from France, Portugal, and the Brazils. Was not this an alarming circumstance to a manufactory of such consequence as the cotton, fustian, and velvet was to this country? By this treaty, France herself might withhold two millions of the

quantity we used, and keep it for her own rising manufactures. And if we were deprived of this raw material, one of our greatest manufactures would be destroyed, or at least transplanted to France. What was there in the treaty to compensate for such an essential loss to the commerce of the kingdom? He knew of none. Much had been said with regard to its reciprocity; but with all his examination of it he could not find one article in which any trace of it existed. Proceeding thus, through several articles of our commerce, he adverted to our situation with Portugal, with respect to the present treaty. As to the idea of our renewing or preserving the METHUEN treaty, he had not the least expectation. We had not preserved to ourselves the only chance which could give us any pretence to ask it with confidence. Portugal knew that we had formed a treaty which precluded us from every possibility of making any advantage of any proposal we might offer, and she might think proper to reject. She would, therefore, not be inclined to give us a benefit for a *bonus* we had not in our power to bestow; for notwithstanding we had a reserve to reduce her wines one third below those of France, yet as we had no means of giving, or rather selling, this advantage to any other, should she refuse it, she could have no reason to accept a proposition tending so much to her disadvantage. What gave a pretence to treaty was, to have it in your power to offer to one, what, if rejected, you might with advantage offer to another. But this you could not expect in the present instance of Portugal wines, and therefore he did not perceive on what species of confidence we could expect the METHUEN treaty to be continued, what was to compensate for the advantage which we lost? 150,000 lb. of salt fish we annually sent to that country. Where could we find a market for this invaluable article of our commerce? If any where, we should expect to have it in France. For as we lost a benefit in consequence of giv-

ing them an advantage, we certainly had a right to expect from them a compensation. But could we expect this? No! They had a fishery of their own. They, therefore, would not take ours. Where then would the right honorable gentleman find the reciprocity in this particular? None could be found. It was consequently evident, that here a most material sacrifice was offered to the pretences of France. We lost not only the sale of our produce, as it might be called, but we lost this proportionate opportunity of reaping those advantages from our fisheries, which rendered them the most immediate and absolute nurseries of our seamen.

“ The right honorable gentleman had made some extraordinary observations concerning the importation of wines into this country, in consequence of the treaty. He did not conceive that any particular advantage could ever be derived from this concession, if it might be so called. Wines were certainly a luxury, and a most agreeable species of luxury, with which we could not dispense. But surely, their importation on one third less duty than before, would not prove the least advantageous to the country from any pretended equivalent that might be offered us.

“ With respect to the equivalent which we were to have for the reduction of the duties on French wines, so as to admit them more freely into our ports, what article had we the privilege of exporting into France? He knew of none. It appeared to him, therefore, an advantage given to France without the least sign of an equivalent. We were admitting French wines into our ports, to the exclusion of those of Portugal, reducing our duties on both, and forfeiting all those advantages which we formerly enjoyed by the METHUEN treaty. Such was the policy and principle of the leading feature of this treaty. The right honorable gentleman had used arguments not less extraordinary in favour of establishing peace between this coun-

try and France. He had asked in his zeal and sanguinary wishes for the event, were not the two countries nearly situated—were they not nearly connected in their mutual intercourse—were they not pursuing the same means of increasing their prosperity—and was not this the only means of uniting a people in the bonds of peace, amity, and prosperity. Such arguments might be used with regard to Spain and Portugal. Portugal might say, Am I not nearly adjoining to Spain? Do we not speak almost the same language? Are we not of the same religion? Are we not similar in manners? And should I not seek rather alliance and protection from a neighbour so near me, and so competent to afford protection from insulting and invading neighbours? These questions are certainly as applicable to Spain and Portugal, as they are to France and England. And yet the answer which would naturally be given to Portugal, as well as Great Britain, was, that vicinity of situation, instead of being the means to connect, is what should excite your fear and jealousy. Portugal being so near to such a superior power as Spain, is certainly in danger of her ambition. It is therefore, that she rather seeks foreign connections and alliances, than union with a country to which she might be sacrificed, had she not such a friend as Great Britain to call to her assistance. This is the reason that Portugal cannot enter into any treaty with Spain with safety, no more than Great Britain can possibly enter into a commercial treaty with France. Both transactions are equally dangerous to us and Portugal; for each of our relative situations is such, as to render this policy extremely hazardous, not only to the prosperity, but to the existence of each country as a nation in the scale of European politics.

As to the stipulation of reducing Portugal wines one third below the French wines, while the eleventh article of the treaty subsisted, he could not conceive that this could have the least effect to preserve the METHUEN treaty

unbroken. For, by the eleventh article, it was agreed, that all commodities imported from either nation into the other should be on terms of the most favoured nations, Portugal excepted. Thus, if we reduced the Spanish wines, we should be obliged also, by the French treaty, to reduce to the same degree the French wines, unless they were already as low as the duties on Portugal wines. Thus should we be obliged to reduce the duties on both the French and Portugal wines, to the great diminution of our revenue, without the least probability of having any pretence to an equivalent."

In the course of his speech, he made several observations on other parts of the produce, commerce, and manufactures of both France and Spain. When he came particularly to enumerate the benefits given in this treaty to France, he could not suppress the strong assertion, that the same advantages were as due to Ireland, as to a rival. He therefore perfectly agreed with what his honorable friend, (Mr. SHERIDAN) had remarked; that it was certainly necessary to form an act to grant them those privileges. The only difficulty, which he perceived in the prosecution of this subject, was the opposition made to the countervailing duties on the Irish propositions. If this could be dispensed with, let the manufacturers come to the bar, and acknowledge that they had been mistaken in the evidence which they had formerly given on the subject. If such were the alteration of circumstances from this treaty, as to give just cause for such a variation of sentiment, he saw no reason for the manufacturers not coming to the bar, and correcting what they had misconceived. Then the Irish might participate in those advantages, to which they had certainly as great a right as the French, on the same conditional countervailing duties.

Mr. Fox mentioned the construction which Mr. PITT put upon some of the articles, and particularly the clause relative to ships and vessels driven by stress of weather

upon the respective coasts of the two contracting powers; asking how the honorable gentleman could expect the manufacturers of the chamber of commerce to understand the treaty, if they were to have words so strangely translated, as to hear "ships driven by the stress of weather upon a coast, termed *shipwrecked*?" He also spoke of the construction which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given to the eleventh article on Friday evening in respect to Spanish wines, and declared that it was a construction by no means obvious or warranted by the wording of the article. Mr. Fox maintained that the treaty was a tempting bait, which none but gudgeons the most simple would have bitten at. He concluded with moving, "that the chairman do leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again."

The committee divided on this motion, ayes 118—noes 252.—The main question on Mr. PITT's motion was then put, and carried by a majority of 258 against 118.

CHAPTER XII.

WAR WITH FRANCE.

DURING the early progress of the French revolution, and long before any decided part was taken by Great Britain, a debate relative to the army estimates, on the 9th of February 1790, led to a very violent shock or conflict of opinions between Mr. BURKE and Mr. Fox. The former argued in favor of a reduction of the peace establishment, from the state of perfect security which the nation at that time enjoyed ; professing that, on a review of all Europe, he did not find that politically we stood in the smallest degree of danger, from one state or kingdom it contained ; nor that any foreign powers, but own our allies, were likely to obtain a preponderance in the scale. " France," said he, " has hitherto been our first object in all considerations concerning the balance of power ; but France is in a political light to be considered as expunged out of the system of Europe. Whether she ever could appear in it again, as a leading power, was not easy to determine ; but at present he considered France as not politically existing ; and most assuredly it would take up much time to restore her to her former active existence. *Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*, might possibly be the language of the rising generation. He did not mean to deny that it was our duty to keep our eye on that nation, and to regulate our preparation by the symptoms of her recovery. That it was to her *strength* not to her *form of government* that we were to attend ; because republics, as well as monarchies, were susceptible of am-

bition, jealousy, and anger, the usual causes of war. But if, whilst France continued in this swoon, we should go on increasing our expenses, we should certainly make ourselves less a match for her when it became our concern to arm. It was said, that, as she had speedily fallen, she might speedily rise again. He doubted this. That the fall from an height was with an accelerated velocity, but to lift up a weight to that height again, was difficult, and opposed by the laws of physical and political gravitation. In a political view, France was low indeed. She had lost every thing—even to her name.

“——Jacet ingens litore truncus,

“ Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.”

He was astonished at it—he was alarmed at it—he trembled at the uncertainty of all human greatness.

“ Since the House had been prorogued in the summer, much work was done in France. The French had shewn themselves the ablest architects of ruin, that had hitherto existed in the world. In that very short space of time they had completely pulled down to the ground their monarchy, their church, their nobility, their law, their revenue, their army, their navy, their commerce, their arts, and their manufactures. They had done their business for us as rivals, in a way which twenty Ramilies or Blenheims could never have done it. Were we absolute conquerors, and France to lie prostrate at our feet, we should be ashamed to send a commission to settle their affairs, which would impose so hard a law upon the French, and so destructive of all their consequence, as a nation, as that they had imposed upon themselves.

“ France, by the mere circumstances of its vicinity, had been, and in a degree always must be, an object of our vigilance, either with regard to her actual power, or to her influence and example. As to the former he had

spoken ; as to the latter, (her example) he should say a few words ; for by this example, our friendship and our intercourse with that nation had once been, and might again become, more dangerous to us than their worst hostility. In the last century, Louis the fourteenth had established a greater and better disciplined force than ever had been before seen in Europe, and with it a perfect despotism. Though that despotism was proudly arrayed in manners, gallantry, splendor, magnificence, and even covered over with the imposing robes of science, literature, and arts, it was in government nothing better than a painted and gilded tyranny ; in religion, an hard, stern, intolerance, the fit companion and auxiliary to the despotic tyranny which prevailed in its government. The same character of despotism insinuated itself into every court of Europe—the same spirit of disproportioned magnificence—the same love of standing armies, above the ability of the people. In particular our then sovereigns, King CHARLES and King JAMES, fell in love with the government of their neighbour, so flattering to the pride of Kings. A similarity of sentiments brought on connections equally dangerous to the liberties and interests of their country. It were well that the infection had gone no farther than the throne. The admiration of a government flourishing and successful, unchecked in its operations, and seeming, therefore, to compass its objects more speedily and effectually, gained something upon all ranks of people. The good patriots of that day, however, struggled against it. They sought nothing more anxiously than to break off all communication with France, and to beget a total alienation from its councils and its example ; which, by the animosity prevalent between the abettors of their religious system, and the assertors of ours, was, in some degree effected. This day the evil is totally changed in France ; but there is an evil there. The disease is altered ; but the vicinity of the countries remains, and must remain ; and

the natural mental habits of mankind are such, that the present distemper of France is far more likely to be contagious than the old one ; for it is not quite easy to spread a passion for servitude among the people ; but in all evils of the opposite kind, our natural inclinations are flattered. In the case of despotism, there is the *sedum crimen servitutis* ; in the last the *falsa species libertatis* ; and accordingly, as the historian says, *pronis auribus accipitur*.

“ In the last age we were in danger of being entangled by the example of France in the net of a relentless despotism. It is not necessary to say any thing upon that example ; it exists no longer. Our present danger from the example of a people, whose character knows no medium, is, with regard to government, a danger from anarchy ; a danger of being led through an admiration of successful fraud and violence, to an imitation of the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy. On the side of religion, the danger of their example is no longer from intolerance, but from atheism, a foul, unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and consolation of mankind ; which seems in France, for a long time, to have been embodied into a faction, accredited and almost avowed.

“ These were our present dangers of France ; but, in his opinion, the very worst part of the example set, was in the late assumption of citizenship by the army, and the whole of the arrangement, or rather disarrangement of their military.

“ He was sorry that his right honorable friend [Mr. Fox] had dropped even a word expressive of exultation on that circumstance ; or that he seemed of opinion that the objection from standing armies was at all lessened by it. He attributed this opinion of Mr. Fox entirely to his known zeal for the best of all causes, liberty. That it was with a pain inexpressible he was obliged to have even

the shadow of his difference with a friend, whose authority would be always great with him, and all thinking people. *Quæ maxima semper censeatur nobis, et erit quæ maxima semper.* His confidence in Mr. Fox was such, and so ample, as to be almost implicit. That he was not ashamed to avow that degree of docility, that when the choice is well made, it strengthens instead of oppressing our intellects. That he who calls in the aid of an equal understanding, doubles his own. He who profits of a superior understanding, raises his powers to a level with the height of the superior understanding he unites with. He had found the benefit of such a junction, and would not lightly depart from it. He wished, almost on all occasions, that his sentiments were understood to be conveyed in Mr. Fox's words; and that he wished, as amongst the greatest benefits he could wish the country, an eminent share of power to that right honorable gentleman; because he knew that to his great and masterly understanding he had joined the greatest possible degree of that natural moderation, which is the best corrective of power; that he was of the most artless, candid, open, and benevolent disposition; disinterested in the extreme; of a temper mild and placable even to a fault; without one drop of gall in his whole constitution.

“ That the House must perceive, from his coming forward to mark an expression or two of his best friend, how anxious he was to keep the distemper of France from the least countenance in England, where he was sure some wicked persons had shewn a strong disposition to recommend an imitation of the French spirit of reform. He was so strongly opposed to any the least tendency towards the means of introducing a democracy like theirs, as well as to the end itself, that much as it would afflict him, if such a thing could be attempted, and that any friend of his could concur in such measures (he was far, very far from believing they could) he would abandon

his best friends, and join with his worst enemies to oppose either the means, or the end ; and to resist all violent exertions of the spirit of innovation, so distant from all principles of true and safe reformation ; a spirit well calculated to overturn states, but perfectly unfit to amend them.

“ That he was no enemy to reformation, almost every business, in which he was much concerned, from the first day he sat in that House to that hour, was a business of reformation ; and when he had not been employed in correcting, he had been employed in resisting abuses. Some traces of this spirit in him then stood on their statute book. In his opinion, any thing which unnecessarily tore to pieces the contexture of the state, not only prevented all real reformation, but introduced evils which would call (but perhaps call in vain) for new reformation.

“ That he thought the French nation very unwise. What they valued themselves on, was a disgrace to them. They had gloried (and some people in England had thought fit to take share in that glory) in making a revolution, as if revolutions were good things in themselves. All the horrors and all the crimes of the anarchy which led to their revolution, which attend its progress, and which may virtually attend it in its establishment, pass for nothing with the lovers of revolutions. The French have made their way, through the destruction of their country, to a bad constitution, when they were absolutely in possession of a good one. They were in possession of it the day the states met in separate orders. Their business, had they been either virtuous, or wise, or had they been left to their own judgment, was to secure the stability and independence of the states, according to those orders, under the monarch on the throne. It was then their duty to redress grievances. Instead of redressing grievances, and improving the fabric of their state, to which they were called by their monarch, and sent by their country,

they were made to take a very different course. They first destroyed all the balances and counterpoises which serve to fix the state, and to give it a steady direction ; and which furnish sure correctives to any violent spirit which may prevail in any of the orders. These balances existed in their oldest constitution, and in the constitution of this country, and in the constitution of all the countries in Europe. These they rashly destroyed, and then they melted down the whole into one incongruous, ill-connected mass.

“ When they had done this, they instantly, with the most atrocious perfidy and breach of all faith among men, laid the axe to the root of all property, and consequently of all national prosperity, by the principles they established, and the example they set, in confiscating all the possessions of the church. They made and recorded a sort of institution and digest of anarchy, called *THE RIGHTS OF MAN*, in such a pedantic abuse of elementary principles as would have disgraced boys at school ; but this declaration of rights was worse than pedantic and trifling in them ; as, by their name and authority, they systematically destroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. By this mad declaration, they subverted the state, and brought on such calamities as no country, without a long war, has ever been known to suffer, and which may in the end produce such a war, and perhaps, many such.

“ With them the question was not between despotism and liberty. The sacrifice they made of the peace and power of their country, was not made on the altar of freedom. Freedom, and a better security for it than that they had taken, they might have had without any sacrifice at all. They brought themselves into all the calamities they suffer, not that through them they might obtain a British constitution ; they plunged themselves headlong

into those calamities, to prevent themselves from settling into that constitution, or into any thing resembling it.

“ That if they should perfectly succeed in what they propose, as they are likely enough to do, and establish a democracy, or a mob of democracies, in a country circumstanced like France, they will establish a very bad government, a very bad species of tyranny.

“ That the worst effect of all their proceedings was on their military, which was rendered an army for every purpose, but that of defence. That, if the question was, whether soldiers were to forget they were citizens, as an abstract proposition, he could have no difference about it ; though, as it is usual, when abstract principles are to be applied, much was to be thought on the manner of uniting the character of citizen and soldier. But as applied to the events which had happened in France, where the abstract principle was clothed with its circumstances, he thought that his friend would agree with him, that what was done there furnished no matter of exultation, either in the act or the example. These soldiers were not citizens, but base hireling mutineers, and mercenary sordid deserters, wholly destitute of any honorable principle.— Their conduct was one of the fruits of that anarchic spirit, from the evils of which a democracy itself was to be resorted to by those who were the least disposed to that form, as a sort of refuge. It was not an army in corps and with discipline, and embodied under the respectable patriot citizens of the state in resisting tyranny. Nothing like it. It was the case of common soldiers, deserting from their officers, to join a furious, licentious populace. It was a desertion to a cause, the real object of which was to level all those institutions, and to break all those connections, natural and civil, that regulate and hold together the community by a chain of subordination ; to raise soldiers against their officers ; servants against their masters ;

tradesmen against their customers ; artificers against their employers ; tenants against their landlords ; curates against their bishops ; and children against their parents. That this cause of theirs was not an enemy to servitude, but to society.

“ He wished the House to consider, how the members would like to have their mansions pulled down and pillaged ; their persons abused, insulted, and destroyed ; their title deeds brought out and burnt before their faces ; and themselves and their families driven to seek refuge in every nation throughout Europe, for no other reason than this, that without any fault of theirs, they were born gentlemen, and men of property, and were suspected of a desire to preserve their consideration and their estates. The desertion in France was to aid an abominable sedition, the very professed principle of which was an implacable hostility to nobility and gentry, and whose savage war-whoop was “ *a l'Aristocrate*, ” by which senseless bloody cry they animated one another to rapine and murder ; whilst abetted by ambitious men of another class, they were crushing every thing respectable and virtuous in their nation, and to their power disgracing almost every name, by which we formerly knew there was such a country in the world as France. He knew too well, and he felt as much as any man, how difficult it was to accommodate a standing army to a free constitution or to any constitution. An armed, disciplined body, is, in its essence, dangerous to liberty ; undisciplined, it is ruinous to society. Its component parts are, in the latter case, neither good citizens, nor good soldiers. What have they thought of in France, under such a difficulty as almost puts the human faculties to a stand ? They have put their army under such a variety of principles of duty, that it is more likely to breed litigants, pettifoggers, and mutineers, than soldiers. They have set up, to balance their crown army, another army, deriving under another authority, called a municipal army

—a balance of armies, not of orders. These latter they have destroyed with every mark of insult and oppression. States may, and they will, best exist with a partition of civil powers. Armies cannot exist under a divided command. This state of things he thought, in effect, a state of war, or at best, but a truce instead of peace, in the country.

“ What a dreadful thing is a standing army, for the conduct of the whole, or any part of which, no man is responsible. In the present state of the French crown army, is the crown responsible for the whole of it? Is there any general who can be responsible for the obedience of a brigade? Any colonel for that of a regiment? Any captain for that of a company? And as to the municipal army, reinforced as it is by the new citizen deserters, under whose command are they? Have we not seen them, not led by, but dragging their nominal commander with a rope about his neck, when they, or those whom they accompanied, proceeded to the most atrocious acts of treason and murder? Are any of these *armies*? Are any of these *citizens*?

“ We have in such a difficulty as that of fitting a standing army to the state, he conceived, done much better. We have not distracted our army by divided principles of obedience. We have put them under a single authority, with a simple (our common) oath of fidelity; and we keep the whole under our annual inspection. This was doing all that could be safely done.

“ He felt some concern that this strange thing, called a Revolution in France, should be compared with the glorious event, commonly called the Revolution in England; and the conduct of the soldiery, on that occasion, compared with the behaviour of some of the troops of France in the present instance. At that period, the Prince of Orange, a prince of the blood royal in England, was called in by the flower of the English aristocracy to defend its

ancient constitution, and not to level all distinctions. To this Prince, so invited, the aristocratic leaders, who commanded the troops, went over with their several corps, in bodies, to the deliverer of their country. Aristocratic leaders brought up the corps of citizens, who newly enlisted in this cause. Military obedience changed its object ; but military discipline was not for a moment interrupted in its principle. The troops were ready for war, but indisposed to mutiny.

“ But as the conduct of the English armies was different, so was that of the whole English nation at that time. In truth, the circumstances of our Revolution (as it is called) and that of France, are just the reverse of each other, in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction. With us it was the case of a legal monarch attempting arbitrary power :—in France, it is the case of an arbitrary monarch, beginning, from whatever cause, to legalize his authority. The one was to be resisted, the other was to be managed and directed ; but in neither case was the order of the state to be changed, lest government might be ruined, which ought only to be corrected and legalized. With us, we got rid of the man, and preserved the constituent parts of the state. There, they get rid of the constituent parts of the state, and keep the man. What we did was in truth and substance, and in a constitutional light, a Revolution, not made, but prevented. We took solid securities ; we settled doubtful questions ; we corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable, fundamental parts of our constitution we made no revolution ; no, nor any alteration at all. We did not impair the monarchy ; perhaps it might be shewn we strengthened it very considerably. The nation kept the same ranks, the same orders, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property, the same subordinations, the same order in the law, in the revenue,

and in the magistracy ; the same Lords, the same Commons, the same corporations, the same electors.

“ The church was not impaired. Her estates, her majesty, her splendor, her orders and gradations continued the same. She was preserved in her full efficiency, and cleared only of a certain intolerance, which was her weakness, and disgrace. The church and the state were the same after the Revolution that they were before, but better secured in every part.

“ Was little done, because a Revolution was not made in the constitution ? No ! every thing was done ; because we commenced with reparation, not with ruin. Accordingly the state flourished. Instead of lying as dead, in a sort of trance, or exposed, as some others, in an epileptic fit, to the pity, or derision of the world, for her wild ridiculous, convulsive movements, impotent to every purpose but that of dashing out her brains against the pavement, Great Britain rose above the standard, even of her former self. An æra of a more improved domestic prosperity then commenced, and still continues, not only unimpaired, but growing, under the wasting hand of time. All the energies of the country were awakened. England never presented a firmer countenance, or a more vigorous arm, to all her enemies, and all her rivals.—Europe under her respired and revived. Every where she appeared as the protector, assertor, or avenger of liberty. A war was made and supported against fortune itself. The treaty of Ryswick, which first limited the power of France, was soon after made ; the grand alliance very shortly followed, which shook to the foundations the dreadful power which menaced the independence of mankind. The states of Europe lay happy under the shade of a great and free monarchy, which knew how to be great, without endangering its own peace at home, or the internal or external peace of any of its neighbours.

“ Mr. BURKE said, he should have felt very unpleasantly if he had not delivered these sentiments. He was near the end of his natural, probably still nearer to the end of his political career ; that he was weak and weary ; and wished for rest. That he was little disposed to controversies, or what is called a detailed opposition. That at his time of life, if he could not do something by some sort of weight of opinion, natural, or acquired, it was useless, and indecorous to attempt any thing by mere struggle. *Turpe senex miles*. That he had for that reason little attended the army business, or that of the revenue, or almost any other matter of detail for some years past. That he had, however, his task. He was far from condemning such opposition ; on the contrary, he most highly applauded it, where a just occasion existed for it, and gentlemen had vigor and capacity to pursue it. Where a great occasion occurred, he was, and while he continued in parliament would be, amongst the most active and the most earnest, as he hoped he had shewn on a late event. With respect to the constitution itself, he wished few alterations in it ; happy if he left it not the worse for any share he had taken in its service.”

Mr. Fox declared, that he rose with a concern of mind, which it was almost impossible to describe, at perceiving himself driven to the hard necessity of making at least a short answer to the latter part of a speech, to which he had listened with the greatest attention, and which, some observations and arguments excepted, he admired as one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that House. There were parts of it, however, which he wished had either been omitted, or deferred to some other and more fit occasion. His right honorable friend, in alluding to him, had mixed his remarks with so much personal kindness towards him, that he felt himself under a difficulty in making any return, lest the House should doubt his sincerity, and consider

what he might say as a mere discharge of a debt of compliments. He must, however, declare, that such was his sense of the judgment of his right honorable friend, such his knowledge of his principles, and such the value which he set upon them, and the estimation in which he held his friendship, that if he were to put all the political information which he had learned from books, all which he had gained from science, and all which the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one great scale, and the improvement which he had derived from his right honorable friend's instruction and conversation were placed in the other, he should be at a loss to decide, to which to give the preference. He had learnt more from his right honorable friend, than from all the men with whom he had ever conversed. His right honorable friend had grounded all which he had said, on that part of a speech made by him on a former day, when he wished that his right honorable friend had been present, in which he had stated, that if ever he could look at a standing army with less constitutional jealousy than before, it was now, since, during the late transactions in France, the army had manifested, that *on becoming soldiers, they did not cease to continue citizens*, and would not act as the mere instruments of a despot. That opinion he still maintained; but did such a declaration warrant the idea, that he was a friend to democracy? He declared himself equally the enemy of all absolute forms of government, whether an absolute monarchy, an absolute aristocracy or an absolute democracy. He was averse from all extremes, and a friend only to a mixed government, like our own, in which, if the aristocracy, or indeed either of the three branches of the constitution, were destroyed, the good effect of the whole, and the happiness derived under it, would in his mind, be at an end. When he described himself as exulting over the success of some of the late attempts in France, he certainly meant to pay a just tribute of ap-

plause to those who, feeling alive to a sense of the oppressions under which their countrymen had groaned, disobeyed the despotic commands of their leaders, and gallantly espoused the cause of their fellow-citizens, in a struggle for the acquisition of that liberty, the felicities of which we all enjoyed. He begged, however, not to be misunderstood in his ideas of liberty. True liberty could only exist amidst the union and co-operation of the different powers which composed the legislative, and the executive government. Never should he lend himself to support any cabal, or scheme, formed in order to introduce any dangerous innovation into our excellent constitution; he would not, however, run the length of declaring, that he was an enemy to every species of innovation. That constitution, which we all revered, owed its perfection to innovation; for however admirable the theory, experience was the true test of its order and beauty. His right honorable friend might rest assured, that they could never differ in principles, however they might differ in their application. In the application of their principles, they more than once had experienced the misfortune of differing, particularly in regard to the representation of the people in parliament, and they might occasionally continue to differ in regard to other points, which depended rather on the application of their principles, than on their principles themselves. The scenes of bloodshed and cruelty which had been acted in France, no man could have heard of, without lamenting; but still, when the severe tyranny under which the people had so long groaned, was considered, the excesses which they committed, in their endeavour to shake off the yoke of despotism, might he thought, be spoken of, with some degree of compassion; and he was persuaded that, unsettled as their present state appeared, it was preferable to their former condition, and that ultimately it would be for the advantage of this country, that France had regained her freedom.

What had given him the greatest uneasiness, in hearing the latter part of his right honorable friend's speech, was, lest from its being well-known that he had long considered it as the boast and happiness of his life to have lived on terms of the most perfect confidence and intimacy with his right honorable friend, an impression might be left on the minds of that House, or on the minds of the public, that there had existed some grounds for suspicion that he could so far forget himself, upon the score either of principles or duty, as at any moment to countenance, or rather not vehemently to reprobate all doctrines and all measures inimical to the constitution. Again, therefore, must he repeat, under the most solemn assurances, to his right honorable friend, that he never would lend himself to any cabal, nor, on any occasion, act in a manner incompatible with the principles which he had so repeatedly professed, and which he held in common with his right honorable friend. He differed, however, from his right honorable friend in his opinion of the Revolution in 1688. From that period we had undoubtedly to date the definition and confirmation of our liberties; and the case was certainly more parallel to the revolution in France, than his right honorable friend seemed willing to allow. The reason why France had so long been settling her constitution, and why we had so soon adjusted ours in 1688, was owing to there being so much despotism to destroy in France, and so little which called for destruction when the revolution in our government took place; a fact which of itself was sufficient to convince his right honorable friend that there was no ground whatever for the apprehensions which he had that day stated. He imputed this warmth of his right honorable friend, and the extent to which he had pushed this argument, to a laudable, but extreme, anxiety, lest any man should be rash enough to hazard an attempt to render what had passed in France an object of imitation in this country. In conclusion,

Mr. Fox observed, that he should embrace a future opportunity of entering more amply into a discussion respecting the affairs of France, as far they may ultimately operate either in favor of, or against this country, should the House consider it necessary to fix upon such a topic for conversation."

"Mr. BURKE answered, that he could, without the least flattery or exaggeration, assure his right honorable friend that the separation of a limb from his body could scarcely give him more pain, than the circumstance of differing from him, violently and publicly, in opinion. It was not even in his idea to insinuate that his right honorable friend would lend his aid to any plan concerted for the support of dangerous and unconstitutional procedures—He knew the contrary—His motive for the remarks which he had made, was to warn those who did not possess the brilliant talents and illumined penetration of his right honorable friend, whose moderation was one of the leading features of his political character, from entertaining sentiments which he conceived to be adverse to good government. He was exceedingly glad, however, that he had delivered himself so plainly in his former speech, since what he had said had drawn from his right honorable friend an explanation not more satisfactory to his mind, than it was (he was persuaded) to the House, and all who had heard it.

"With regard to innovation, he was the last man living who was an enemy to reform. Indeed, he must be regarded as a fool, if he, who had himself been a known proposer of reforms of various descriptions, should now stand up as an enemy to every reform. All which he was anxious to protect and preserve, were the grounds of the constitution itself, which ought ever to be kept sacred. Of clubs, and associations he had, generally, disapproved; and he should always resist, to the utmost of his power and ability, any attempt to destroy or en-

feeble the first principles of our unrivalled form of government, in the defence of which, were it to become necessary, the last drop of his blood should be expended. Having recurred to the example of the conduct of France, during a time of peace, and contended, that, as was the case in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, it had frequently proved more dangerous to this country than a state of open war, Mr. BURKE, in conclusion, became again the warm panegyrist of Mr. FOX ; and repeated and re-inforced the doctrine which he had maintained upon the subject of the revolution."

Mr. SHERIDAN declared, " that he rose with the greatest regret ; but that the very reasons which his right honorable friend (Mr. BURKE) had given for the sentiments which he had that day uttered, namely, an apprehension of being supposed to acquiesce in the opinions of those for whom he entertained the highest regard, and with whom he had uniformly acted, operated also on his mind, and made him feel it a duty to declare, that he differed decidedly from that right honorable gentleman in almost every word that he had uttered respecting the French Revolution. Mr. SHERIDAN added some warm compliments to Mr. BURKE's general principles ; but said that he could not conceive how it was possible for a person of such principles, or for any man who valued our own constitution, and revered the Revolution that obtained it for us, to unite with such feelings an indignant and unqualified abhorrence of all the proceedings of the patriotic party in France.

" He conceived theirs to be as just a Revolution as ours, proceeding upon as sound a principle, and a greater provocation. He vehemently defended the general views and conduct of the national assembly ; he could not even understand what was meant by the charge against them of having overturned the laws, the justice, and the revenues of their country. What were their laws ? The ar-

bitrary mandates of capricious despotism. What their justice? The partial adjudications of venal magistrates. What their revenue? National bankruptcy. This he thought the fundamental error of the right honorable gentleman's argument, that he accused the national assembly of creating the evils, which they had found existing in full deformity at the first hour of their meeting. The public creditor had been defrauded; the manufacturer was without employ; trade was languishing; famine clang upon the poor; despair on all. In this situation, the wisdom and feelings of the nation were appealed to by the government; and was it to be wondered at by Englishmen, that a people, so circumstanced, should search for the cause and source of all their calamities; or that they should find them in the arbitrary constitution of their government, and in the prodigal and corrupt administration of their revenues? For such an evil, when proved, what remedy could be resorted to, but a radical amendment of the frame and fabric of the constitution itself. This change was not the object and wish of the national assembly only; it was the claim and cry of all France, united as one man for one purpose. He joined with Mr. BURKE in abhorring the cruelties that had been committed; but what was the striking lesson, the awful moral that was to be gathered from the outrages of the people? What? but a superior abhorrence of that accursed system of despotic government, which had so deformed and corrupted human nature, as to make its subjects capable of such acts; a government that sets at nought the property, the liberty, the lives of the subjects; a government that deals in extortions, dungeons and tortures; sets an example of depravity to the slaves it rules over; and if a day of power comes to the wretched populace, it is not to be wondered at, however it is to be regretted, that they act without those feelings of justice and humanity, which the principles and the practice of their go-

vernors have stripped them of. At the same time, if there were any persons, who for the purposes of their own private and personal ambition, had instigated those outrages, they, whatever their rank, birth, or fortune, deserved the execration of mankind. Justice, however, required, that no credit should be given, to mere rumors, on such a subject.

“ But whatever these outrages were, or whoever caused them, was the national assembly in any respect responsible? The national assembly, who, in all cases, had interfered with zeal and alacrity for the maintenance of order and just subordination. What action of theirs authorised the appellation of a *bloody, ferocious and tyrannical democracy*? Language like this had been but too prevalent in some of the ministerial prints, and he had always seen it with regret; for to traduce the national assembly, was, in his mind to libel the whole French nation: whatever was great or good in France must be looked for there or no where.”

Mr. SHERIDAN next attacked Mr. BURKE's declaration, “ that the French might have received a good constitution from their monarch. What! was it preparing for them in the camp of marshal BROGLIO? or were they to search for it in the ruins of the *Bastille*? He avowed a most eager and sanguine hope that the *despotism of France should never be restored*. He avowed this, not only as a friend to the general rights of mankind, but as a politician, speaking only for the advantage of his country. He was convinced, that it was for the interest of Great Britain, that the despotism of France should be destroyed. Whoever looked into our history, would come at once to the opinion, that the greater part of the expense of blood and treasure of this nation had been owing to the circumstance of France being a *despotic government*, and being a despotic government, being what all despotisms ever had been, a government of unprincipled ambition,

and without faith or justice in its dealings with other nations. Let France amend her constitution, she *may* become more powerful in her permanent resources, but she certainly *will* be a juster, worthier, and more peaceable nation, and more likely to act toward us, as we do now towards her. The French were naturally a brave and generous people ; their vice had been in their government. In hoping, however, that that government might be radically amended, he could not be thought to approve of wanton persecution of the nobility, or any insult to Royalty ; it was consistent with the spirit of the most perfect constitution, that the monarch should retain all the powers, dignities, and prerogatives becoming the first magistrate of so great a country.

“ Mr. SHERIDAN went into other parts of the discussion respecting the French Revolution, and paid high compliments to the Marquis DE LA FAYETTE, Monsieur BAILY, and others of the French patriots ; and concluded with expressing his regret that so many friends of the minister had held sentiments apparently contrary, and above all, that his right honorable friend should have suffered his humanity, however justly appealed to, to have biased his judgment on so great a question.

“ Mr. SHERIDAN, before he had done, could not help strongly marking a farther difference with Mr. BURKE with respect to our own Revolution of 1688. He had never been accustomed to consider that transaction as merely the removal of one man, and the substitution of another, but as the glorious æra that gave real and efficient freedom to this country, and established, on a permanent basis, those sacred principles of government, and reverence for the rights of men, which he, for one, could not value here, without wishing to see them diffused throughout the world.”

Mr. BURKE answered, “ that he most sincerely lamented over the inevitable necessity of now publicly declaring

that henceforth, his honorable friend and he were separated in politics ; yet even in the very moment of separation, he expected that his honorable friend, for so he had been in the habit of calling him, would have treated him with some degree of kindness ; or at least, if he had not for the sake of a long and amicable connection, heard him with some partiality, have done him the justice of representing his arguments fairly. On the contrary, he had, as cruelly as unexpectedly, misrepresented the nature of his remarks. The honorable gentleman had thought proper to charge him with being the advocate of despotism, though in the beginning of his former speech he had expressly reprobated every measure which carried with it even the slightest appearance of despotism. All who knew him could not avoid, without the most unmerited violation of natural justice, acknowledging that he was the professed enemy of despotism, in every shape, whether, as he had before observed, it appeared as the splendid tyranny of Louis the Fourteenth, or the outrageous democracy of the present government of France, which levelled all distinctions in society. The honorable gentleman had also charged him with having libelled the national assembly, and stigmatised them as a bloody, cruel, and ferocious democracy. He appealed to the House, whether he had uttered one single syllable concerning the national assembly, which could warrant such a construction as the honorable gentleman had put upon his words. He felt himself warranted in positively repelling the imputation ; because the whole tenor of his life, he hoped, at least, had proved that he was a sincere and firm friend to freedom ; and, under that description, he was concerned to find that there were persons in this country, who entertained theories of government, not thoroughly consistent with the safety of the state, and were, perhaps, ready to transfer a part, at least, of that anarchy which prevailed in France, to this kingdom, for

the purpose of effectuating their own designs. Yet, if the honorable gentleman considered him as guilty, why did he not attack him as the foe of his country? As to the charge of abusing the national assembly, it might seem almost sufficient to answer, "What is the national assembly to us?" But, he declared he did not libel the national assembly of France, whom he considered very little in the discussion of these matters; that he thought all the substantial power resided in the republic of Paris, whose authority guided, or whose example was followed by all the republics of France. The republic of Paris had an army under their orders, and not under those of the national assembly. The honorable gentleman has asked from whence the people of France were to expect a better constitution? whether from Marshal BROGLIO at the head of his army; or were they to look for it amidst the dungeons of the *Bastille*? Was that a fair and candid mode of treating his argument? Or was it what we ought to have expected in the moment of departed friendship? On the contrary, was it not evident that the honorable gentleman had made a sacrifice of his friendship, for the sake of catching some momentary popularity? If the fact were such, however, even greatly as he should continue to admire the honorable gentleman's talents, he must tell him that his argument was chiefly an argument *ad invidiam*, and that all the applause for which he could hope from clubs, was scarcely worth the sacrifice he had chosen to make for so insignificant an acquisition."

A bill introduced by Mr. PITT the year after for the better government of Canada, gave rise to another debate between Mr. BURKE and Mr. Fox, which completely dissolved their political connection. When the chairman put the question, "that the clauses of the bill be read paragraph by paragraph," Mr. BURKE said "he should speak to the general principle. The House was going to do an high and important act; to appoint a legislature for a distant people, and to affirm a legal authority in itself, to

exercise this high power. The first consideration then was, the competency or incompetency of the House to do such an act; for if it was not competent, the beneficence of the intention, or the goodness of the constitution they were about to give, would avail nothing. A body of rights, commonly called the *rights of man*, imported from a neighbouring country, was lately set up by some persons in this, as paramount to all other rights. This new code was, "That all men are by nature free, equal in respect of rights, and continue so in society." If this code were admitted, then the power of the House could extend no farther than to call together all the inhabitants of Canada, and recommend to them the free choice of a constitution for themselves. On what then was this House to found its competence? There was another code, on which men in all ages had acted, viz. the *law of nations*, and on this code he thought the competence of the House must rest. This country had acquired the power of legislating for Canada by right of conquest; and in virtue of that right, all the rights and duties of the old government had devolved upon us. In the second place, came the right by the cession of the old government: and in the third, the right of possession, which we had held about thirty years. All these, according to the law of nations, enabled us to legislate for the people of Canada, bound us to afford them an equitable government, and them to allegiance. Setting aside then the doctrines of rights of men, which was never preached any where without mischief, the House was bound to give to the people of Canada the best government that their local situation and their connection with this country would admit. How was this to be done? He could not refer to the expedients of old governments, for that was exploded by the academies of Paris and the clubs of London, who saw too much by the light of their new lantern to have recourse to any other. The great examples to be considered were the constitutions of America, of France, and of Great Britain. To that of Ame-

rica great attention, no doubt, was due, because it was of importance that the people of Canada should have nothing to envy in the constitution of a country so near to their own. Situation and circumstances were first to be considered—*Non mihi res, sed rebus me submittere conor.*—They were not to imitate the examples of countries that had disregarded circumstances, torn asunder the bonds of society, and even the ties of nature. In the local situation, was there any thing to give a preference to the American constitution, or in the habits of the people? Part of the province was inhabited chiefly by persons who had migrated from the United States. These men had fled from the blessings of the American government; and there was no danger of their going back. There might be many causes of emigration not connected with government, such as a more fertile soil, or more genial climate; but they had forsaken all the advantages of a more fertile soil, and more southern latitude, for the bleak and barren regions of Canada. There was no danger of their being so much shocked by the introduction of the British constitution, as to return. The people of America had, he believed, formed a constitution as well adapted to their circumstances as they could. But, compared with the French, they had a certain quantity of phlegm, of old English good nature, that fitted them better for a republican government. They had also a republican education; their former internal government was republican; and the principles and vices of it were restrained by the beneficence of an over-ruling monarchy in this country. The formation of their constitution was preceded by a long war, in the course of which, by military discipline, they learned order, submission to command, and a regard for great men. They learned what, if it was allowable in so enlightened an age as the present to allude to antiquity, a king of Sparta had said was the great wisdom to be learned in his country—"to command, and to obey." They were trained to government by war, not by plots, murders,

and assassinations. In the next place, they had not the materials of monarchy, or aristocracy among them. They did not, however, set up the absurdity, that the nation should govern the nation; that Prince PRETTYMAN should govern Prince PRETTYMAN; but formed their government, as near as they could, according to the model of the British constitution. Yet he did not say, give this constitution to a British colony, because if the imitation of the British constitution was so good, why not give them the thing itself; as he, who professed to sing like a nightingale, was told by the person to whom he offered his talents, "that he could hear the nightingale herself." Hence he thought the greater number of inhabitants of that description would have no objection to the British constitution; and the British inhabitants were probably not so much corrupted by the clubs of London, and the academies of Paris, as to think any form of government preferable to an old one. The ancient Canadians were next to be considered, and being the most numerous, they were entitled to the greatest attention. Were we to give them the French constitution—a constitution founded on principles diametrically opposite to ours, that could not assimilate with it in a single point; as different from it as wisdom from folly, as vice from virtue, as the most opposite extremes in nature—a constitution founded on what was called the *rights of man*? But let this constitution be examined by its practical effects in the French West India colonies.—These, notwithstanding three disastrous wars, were most happy and flourishing, till they heard of the *rights of man*. As soon as this system arrived among them, PANDORA'S box, replete with every mortal evil, seemed to fly open; hell itself to yawn; and every demon of mischief to overspread the face of the earth. Blacks rose against whites, whites against blacks, and each against one another in murderous hostility; subordination was destroyed; the bonds of society torn asunder; and each man seemed to thirst for the blood of his neighbour;

“ Black spirits and white,
“ Blue spirits and grey,
“ Mingle, mingle, mingle.”

All was toil and trouble, discord and blood from the moment that this doctrine was promulgated among them; and he verily believed, that wherever the *rights of men* were preached, such ever had been and ever would be the consequences. France, who has generously sent them the precious gift of the *rights of men*, did not like this image of herself reflected in her child, and sent out a body of troops, well seasoned too with the *rights of men*, to restore order and obedience. These troops, as soon as they arrived, instructed as they were in the principles of government, felt themselves bound to become parties in the general rebellion, and, like most of their brethren at home, began asserting their rights by cutting off the head of their general. Mr. BURKE read the late accounts from St. Domingo, delivered to the national assembly, and added that by way of equivalent for this information, M. BARNAVE announced the return of the members of the late colonial assembly to the true principles of the constitution. The members of an assembly no longer in existence had bequeathed their return to the principles of the constitution as their last act and deed as a body, and this was an equivalent for all the horrors occasioned by troops joining in a rebellion which they were sent to quell. Ought this example to induce us to send to our colonies a cargo of the *rights of men*? As soon would he send them a bale of infected cotton from Marseilles. If we had so little regard for any of our colonies, as to give them that, for the sake of an experiment, which we would not take ourselves, if we were for *periculum in corpore vili*, let us think how it would operate at home. Let us consider the effects of the French constitution on France, a constitution on which he looked not with approbation, but with horror, as involving every principle to be detested, and pregnant

with every consequence to be dreaded and abominated, and the use which they proposed to make of it. They had told us themselves, and their partizans in this country, the Revolution and the Unitarian Societies, had told us, that they had erected a great monument for the instruction of mankind. This was certainly done, not without a view to imitation. Let us see what we were called upon to imitate ; what were the last acts of the contrivers of this glorious form of government. There were here no doubts of the facts, for they were related by the authors ; and there were cases in which the falsest of men might be believed, namely, when they gave a true character of themselves. When they had got a constitution, moulded according to the newest pattern of the *rights of man*, when they had got a King, who was every thing in name, and nothing in reality, over whom, as a state prisoner, the Marquis DE LA FAYETTE, the chief jailer of Paris, mounted guard ; he was desirous of taking a little fresh air, and a little recreation in the country, and they granted him a *day rule* to go five miles from Paris. But then recollecting, as it is the quality of the *rights of men* never to be secure, that this temporary release from imprisonment might afford the means of escape, they surrounded his carriage, commanded him to stop, and one of the grenadiers of his faithful and loyal body guard presented his bayonet to the breast of the fore-horse."

In pursuing these and the like observations, Mr. BURKE was frequently called to order, but still persevered in his remarks on the French Revolution, till lord SHEFFIELD made a formal motion on the irregularity of introducing narratives of the transactions in France into a debate on the question " that the clauses of the Quebec bill be read paragraph by paragraph."

Mr. Fox said, " he was sincerely sorry to feel that he must support the motion, and the more so as his right honorable friend had made it necessary by bringing on, in

so irregular a manner, a discussion of a matter by no means connected with the Quebec bill, in a manner which he could not help thinking, extremely unfair, but which he must consider as a direct injustice to him. If the right honorable gentleman's argument over the way, with regard to order, was to obtain order, it was a mode of order that would go to stop every proceeding of that House, especially in committees. It was proper to debate the principle of a bill in the second reading of it, and referring to matter that might be analogous, much latitude would be required; the Quebec bill had been read a second time and was decided: If gentlemen, therefore, when a bill was in a committee, would come down and state in long speeches, general answers to all possible objections, to clauses that might be proposed, but were never meant to be proposed, debates might be drawn to any imaginable length, and the business of the House suspended at the pleasure of any one of its members. The argument which some gentlemen might possibly move, that the chairman leave the chair, was applicable to every clause, and to every stage of the bill in the committee; and if on that account every species of volunteer argument was to be held in order, it would be impossible for business to proceed. His right honorable friend, instead of debating the principle of the bill in any stage, which was usual, had come down, not to debate the clauses, but to fortify misrepresentations of what he had said in a former debate, which his right honorable friend did not even hear. Order and discretion in debate had been said to be distinct; with him, Mr. Fox declared they never should be separate. Where the distinction lay he could not see, for he always conceived that order was founded on discretion. He was not in the habit of interrupting any gentleman on the point of order; because, unless the deviation from it was strong indeed, more time was often lost in calling to order, than by suf-

fering gentlemen to proceed. But if he saw any discussion attempted to be introduced in a way not merely irregular, but unfair, he felt himself obliged to endeavour to stop it. Much had been said, on the present occasion, of the danger of theory, and the safety of practice. Now, what had been the conduct of the gentleman who looked on theory with abhorrence? Not to enter into a practical discussion of the bill clause by clause, and to examine whether it gave, what it professed to give, the British constitution to Canada; but having neglected to have done his duty, and attended the proper stage of debating the principle, to enter into a theoretical inquiry of what the principle ought to be, and a discussion of the constitution of another country, respecting which it was possible that he might differ from him. If this were not manifest eagerness to seek a difference of opinion; and anxiety to discover a cause of dispute, he knew not what was; since if they came to the clauses of the bill, he did not think there would be any difference of opinion, or at most but a very trifling one. If the right honorable gentleman's object had been to debate the Quebec bill, he would have debated it clause by clause, according to the established practice of the House. If his object had been to prevent danger apprehended to the British constitution, from the opinions of any man, or any set of men, he would have given notice of a particular day for that particular purpose, or taken any other occasion of doing it, rather than that on which his nearest and dearest friend had been grossly misrepresented and traduced. That at least was the course which he should himself have taken, and therefore what he naturally expected from another. The course which his right honorable friend had chosen to take, was that which seemed to confirm the insinuation urged against him, that of having maintained republican principles as applicable to the British constitution, in a former debate on the bill. No such argument had ever been urged by

him, nor any from which such an inference was fairly deducible. On the French Revolution he did indeed differ from his right honorable friend. Their opinions, he had no scruple to say, were as wide as the poles asunder; but what had a difference of opinion on that, which to the House was only matter of theoretical contemplation, to do with the discussion of a practical point, on which no such difference existed? On that Revolution, he adhered to his opinion, and never would retract one syllable of what he had said. He repeated, that he thought it, on the whole, one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind. But when he had on a former occasion mentioned France, he had mentioned the Revolution only, and not the constitution; the latter remained to be improved by experience, and accommodated to circumstances. The arbitrary system of government was done away; the new one had the good of the people for its object, and this was the point on which he rested. This opinion, Mr. Fox said, he wished the time might come to debate, if opinions of his were again to be made the subject of parliamentary discussion. He had no concealment of his opinions, but if any thing could make him shy of such a discussion, it would be the fixing a day to catechise him respecting his political creed, and respecting opinions on which the House was neither going to act, nor called upon to act at all. He had been thus catechised in 1782, when a right honorable gentleman [Mr. DUNDAS] in the last stage of the then administration had said, "Admitting this administration to be bad, where are you to find a better? Will you admit men into power, who say, that the representation of the people is inadequate, and whose principles would overturn the constitution?" On that occasion, he had found an able defender in a right honorable gentleman, whom he could not expect to be his defender that day? but who had in 1782 demanded in manly and energetic tones, "if the House would bear to

be told, that the country was incapable of furnishing an administration more worthy of trust, than that whose misconduct was admitted even by its advocates?" He might now have looked for a defender to another quarter, to the bench on which he sat, and been as much disappointed. Yet the chatechiser on that occasion had soon after joined another ministry, and supported that very reform of the representation which he then deprecated as more dangerous to the constitution and the country than all the misfortunes of that administration. Were he to differ from his right honorable friend on points of history, on the constitution of Athens, or of Rome, was it necessary that the difference should be discussed in that House? Were he to praise the conduct of the elder BRUTUS, and to say, that the expulsion of the TARQUINS was a noble and patriotic act, would it thence be fair to argue, that he meditated the establishment of a consular government in this country? Were he to repeat the eloquent eulogium of CICERO on the taking off of CÆSAR, would it thence be deducible, that he went with a knife about him for the purpose of killing some great man or orator? Let those who said, that to admire was to wish to imitate, shew that there was some similarity of circumstances. It lay on his right honorable friend to shew that this country was in the precise situation of France at the time of the French Revolution, before he had a right to meet his argument; and then with all the obloquy which might be heaped upon the declaration, he should be ready to say, that the French Revolution was an object of imitation for this country. Instead of seeking for differences of opinions on topics, happily for the country, entirely topics of speculation, let them come to matter of fact, and of practical application; let them come to the discussion of the bill before them, and see whether his objections to it were republican, and in what he should differ from his right honorable friend? He had been warned by high and

most respectable authorities, that minute discussion of great events, without information, did no honor to the pen that wrote, or the tongue that spoke the words. If the committee should decide that his right honorable friend should pursue his argument on the French constitution, he would leave the House ; and if some friend would send him word, when the clauses of the Quebec bill were to be discussed, he would return and debate them. And when he said this, he said it from no unwillingness to listen to his right honorable friend : he always had heard him with pleasure, but not where no practical use could result from his argument. When the proper period of discussion came, feeble as his powers were, compared with those of his right honorable friend, whom we must call his master, for he had taught him every thing he knew in politics, (as he had declared on a former occasion, and he meant no compliment when he said so,) yet feeble as his powers comparatively were, he should be ready to maintain the principles he had asserted, even against his right honorable friend's superior eloquence, and maintain, that the *rights of man*, which his right honorable friend had ridiculed as chimerical and visionary, were in fact the basis and foundation of every rational constitution, and even of the British constitution itself, as our statute book proved ; since, if he knew any thing of the original compact between the people of England and its government, as stated in that volume, it was a recognition of the original inherent rights of the people as men, which no prescription could supersede, no accident remove or obliterate. If such were principles dangerous to the constitution, they were the principles of his right honorable friend, from whom he had learnt them. During the American war they had together rejoiced at the successes of a WASHINGTON, and sympathized almost in tears for the fall of a MONTGOMERY. From his right honorable friend he had learned

that the revolt of a whole people could never be countenanced, and encouraged, but must have been provoked. Such had at that time been the doctrine of his right honorable friend, who had said with equal energy, and emphasis, "that he could not draw a bill of indictment against a whole people."

"Mr. Fox declared he was sorry to find that his right honorable friend had since learned to draw such a bill of indictment, and to crowd it with all the technical epithets which disgraced our statute book, of false, malicious, wicked, by the instigation of the devil, not having the fear of God before your eyes, &c. Having been taught by his right honorable friend that no revolt of a nation was caused without provocation, he could not help feeling a joy ever since the constitution of France became founded on the *rights of man*, on which the British constitution itself was founded. To deny it, was neither more or less than to libel the British constitution; and no book his right honorable friend could cite, no words he might deliver in debate, however ingenious, eloquent, and able, as all his writings and all his speeches undoubtedly were, could induce him to change or abandon that opinion: he differed upon that subject with his right honorable friend *toto cælo*."

Having proceeded thus far, Mr. Fox declared "he had said more than he intended, possibly much more than was either wise or proper; but it was a common error arising from his earnestness to be clearly understood; but if his sentiments could serve the other side of the House, which had countenanced the discussion of that day, apparently in order to get at them, they had acted unnecessarily. They might be sure of him and his sentiments on every subject, without forcing on any thing like a difference between him and his right honorable friend, and having once heard them, they might act upon them as they thought proper."

Mr. BURKE said, that " though he had been called to order so many times, he had sat with perfect composure, and had heard the most disorderly speech that perhaps ever was delivered in that House. He had not pursued the conduct of which an example had been set to him, but had heard, without the least interruption, that speech out to the end, irregular and disorderly as it had been ; his words and his conduct throughout had been misrepresented, and a personal attack had been made upon him from a quarter he never could have expected, after a friendship and an intimacy of more than twenty-two years ; and not only his public conduct, words, and writings, had been alluded to in the severest terms, but confidential conversations and private opinions had been brought forward, with a view of proving he acted inconsistently ; and now a motion was introduced, which hindered him, in a great measure, from having an opportunity to ascertain, by facts, what he had stated as opinions. He could not help thinking, that, on the subject of the French Revolution, he had met with great unfairness from the right honorable gentleman, who had said as much as that he had acted and spoken rashly, without information, and unsupported by facts to bear out his deductions ; and this had been treated in a manner that did little justice to his feelings, and had little appearance of decency on the part of the right honorable gentleman. However, when, and as often as this subject came to be discussed fairly, and facts that he was possessed of allowed to be brought forward, he was ready to meet the right honorable gentleman hand to hand, and foot to foot upon it. Much was said against proceeding without good information. He was ready to state his proofs for all the facts he had alleged, to which public proof was at all applicable ; that, indeed, there were a few particulars on which he did not chuse to take issue ; because, in the present state of things in the happy country of France, he

might subject his relators to the fashionable summary justice of the *lanterne*. Under a very few reserves of that kind, he was ready to enter into the discussion concerning the facts in that book, whenever he pleased. He might possibly fall into minute and trivial mistakes, but he was sure he was substantially right in every substantial matter of fact. To the few matters on which he must decline offering proof, he pledged himself, upon his honor, that he had sufficient to satisfy a sober and considerate judgment. But this, it seemed, was not the cause of quarrel; it was not because this authority, or that example, was mentioned, but he was accused of misrepresenting what the right honorable gentleman had said on a former day, when he owned he was not present, and which he disavowed in the most positive terms. He denied any reference to that, or any other speech of the right honorable gentleman, and contended that he had argued on this, as he wished to do on every other occasion, in a candid, plain, and simple manner.

“ With regard to the subject which he meant to introduce into the committee on the Quebec bill, the right honorable gentleman was no stranger to the grounds he meant to go upon. He opened to him very particularly the plan of his speech; how far he meant to go; and what limits he proposed to put upon himself. His reasons for forming those opinions he had mentioned in the fullest and most particular manner to him, at his own house, and walked from thence to that House with him, conversing all the time on that subject. The right honorable gentleman had then entirely disagreed with him upon it, but they had no quarrel upon it, and what the right honorable gentleman had said upon the subject, he did not now wish to state. He could not, however, be persuaded, from what the right honorable gentleman said, to give up his purpose of stating to the House, upon this occasion, his mind with regard to the French constitu-

tion, and the facts which led him to think as he did ; and certainly in this he thought there could be nothing disorderly, especially when so much had already been introduced, not about the constitution of Quebec, but about the American constitution. He had asserted that dangerous doctrines were encouraged in this country, and that dreadful consequences might ensue from them, which it was his sole wish and ambition to avert, by strenuously supporting the constitution of Great Britain as it is, which, in his mind, could better be done by preventing impending danger, than by any remedy that could afterwards be applied ; and he thought himself justified in saying this, because he did know that there were people in this country avowedly endeavouring to disorder its constitution and government, and that in a very bold manner. The practice now was, upon all occasions, to praise in the highest strain, the French constitution : some, indeed, qualified their argument so far, by praising only the French Revolution ; but in that he could see no difference, as the French constitution, if they had any, was the consequence and effect of that Revolution. So fond were gentlemen of this favorite topic, that whoever disapproved of the anarchy and confusion that had taken place in France, or could not foresee the benefits that were to arise out of it, were stigmatised as enemies to liberty, and to the British constitution, charges that were false, unfounded, misapplied, and every way unfair. Doctrines of this kind, he thought, were extremely dangerous at all times, and much more so, if they were to be sanctioned by so great a name as that of the right honorable gentleman, who always put whatever he said in the strongest and most forcible view that it could appear in. Thus it had become common to set the French constitution, up against the English constitution, upon all occasions, when the comparison could be introduced ; and then he insisted, if the former was praised, the latter

must be proportionably depreciated. Here again he reverted to what he had been told had passed on a former day, when he said the right honorable gentleman had taken fire when the French constitution was mentioned, and had termed it the most glorious and stupendous fabric that ever was reared by human wisdom.

“ He still insisted, that the discussion of the Quebec bill was a proper opportunity, after what had been said, for entering upon a true and minute comparison of the French constitution with that of England, though the disorderly rage for order that prevailed that day, seemed to be adopted for the purpose of precluding every fair or proper discussion. He had that day been accused, among other breaches of friendship towards the right honorable gentleman, of having provoked this discussion, to give an advantage to the right honorable gentleman’s enemies, a principle that he utterly disclaimed, and never thought that any fair or candid man could have brought; however, if any could have supposed so before, what they had heard from the opposite side of the House, this day must convince them of the contrary. In what he had repeatedly said and written concerning the French revolution, he had been accused of stating his opinions rashly, and without foundation, a charge which he was certainly anxious and able to refute, if he had been allowed; and at the very time when he was going to produce facts in support of what he had asserted, blended partly with private information and respectable authorities, though he perhaps might have gone greater lengths than he wished, by disclosing communications which he ought to conceal, yet being so particularly called upon, he would have done it; at this very moment he was stopped in the most unfair, and notwithstanding as he had already said, the rage for order, the most disorderly manner; and but for this extraordinary conduct, he would have proved that the issue of the French constitution, or revolution, which

they liked to call it, was not intended for, and never could be, for the cause of liberty, but on the contrary, ever was, and ever would be, for the cause of tyranny, oppression, injustice, anarchy, and confusion. After what had been said, nobody could impute to him interested or personal motives for his conduct; those with whom he had been constantly in habits of friendship and agreement, were all against him, and from the other side of the House he was not likely to have much support; yet all he did, was no more than his duty. It was a struggle not to support any man, or set of men, but a struggle to support the British constitution, in doing which he had incurred the displeasure of all about him, and those opposite to him; and what was worst of all, he had induced the right honorable gentleman to rip up the whole course and tenor of his life, public and private, and that not without a considerable degree of asperity. His failings and imperfections had been keenly exposed, and, in short, without the chance of gaining one new friend, he had made enemies, it appeared malignant enemies, of his old friends; but, after all, he esteemed his duty far beyond any friendship, any fame, or any other consideration whatever. He had stated the danger which the constitution was daily in, from the doctrines and conduct of particular persons; however, as neither side of the House supported him in this, but as both sides thought otherwise, he would not press that point upon them now in any stronger way than he had done; but he would still aver, that no assistance which could be either given or refused to him, would ever bias him against the excellence of the British constitution; nor lead him to think well of the French revolution, or the constitution, as it was named, that was formed in its place. The right honorable gentleman, in the speech he had made, treated him in every sentence with uncommon harshness. In the first place, after being fatigued with skirmishes of order, which

were wonderfully managed by his light troops, he then brought down the whole strength and heavy artillery of his own judgment, eloquence, and abilities upon him, to crush him at once, by declaring a censure upon his whole life, conduct, and opinions. Notwithstanding this great and serious, though, on his part, unmerited attack, and attempt to crush him, he would not be dismayed; he was not yet afraid to state his sentiments in that House, or any where else, and he would tell all the world that the constitution was in danger. And here he must, in the most solemn manner, express his disapprobation of what was notorious to the country, and to the world. Are there not clubs in every quarter, who meet and vote resolutions, the contents of which, was it necessary for him to enumerate? Do they not correspond all over the country, and with other countries? Do they not preach in their pulpits doctrines that are dangerous, and celebrate at their anniversary meetings, proceedings incompetent with the spirit of the British constitution? Admitting these, and he believed nobody here would say his observations were ill founded, would they hesitate a moment to pronounce such transactions dangerous to the constitution, and extremely mischievous in their nature; when added to this, infamous libels against the constitution were circulated every where? The malignity, with which the right honorable gentleman had spoken his sentiments with regard to government, and the charge of inconsistency in his political life and opinions, were neither fair nor true; for he denied that he ever had any different idea of government from what he now entertained, and had upon many occasions stated; he laid it down as a maxim, that monarchy was the basis of all good government, and that the nearer to monarchy that any government approached, the more perfect it was, and *vice versa*; and he certainly, in his wildest moments, never had so far forgotten the nature of government, as to argue that we ought to wish

for a constitution that we could alter at pleasure, and change like a dirty shirt. He was by no means anxious for a monarchy with a dash of republicanism to correct it. But the French constitution was the exact opposite of the English in every thing, and nothing could be so dangerous as to set it up to the view of the English, to mislead and debauch their minds. In carrying on this attack against him, the right honorable gentleman had been supported by a corps of well-disciplined troops, expert in their manœuvres, and obedient to the word of their commander."

(Mr. GREY here called Mr. BURKE to order, conceiving that it was disorderly to mention gentlemen in that way, and to ascribe improper motives to them.)

Mr. BURKE explained, and went on. He said, "he had formerly stated, that he believed those who fomented what he dreaded as dangerous to the constitution, to be a very small number indeed; it was not from their numbers now, but if the spirit was suffered to ferment, who could tell what might happen? Let it be remembered there were 300,000 men in arms in France, who at the proper moment might assist that spirit; and though there might be no immediate danger threatening the British constitution, yet a time of scarcity or tumult might come, and in such a case it was certainly safer and wiser to prevent the consequences, than to remedy the evil. He recurred to 1780, and mentioned the dreadful consequences of the riots occasioned by lord GEORGE GORDON. Had he at that time cautioned the House to beware of the Protestant Association, and other caballing meetings, he supposed his cautions would have been treated in the same way as those he offered now; but he trusted no person would wish again to see such destruction and disorder: the houses of some of the greatest and best men that ever adorned the country, the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM and Sir GEORGE SAVILLE, beset by the mob, and obliged to

be defended by armed force; they surely could not desire again to behold camps in all our squares, and garrisons in our palaces. As to the present state of this country, he described the King in full power in all his functions; that his ministers were responsible for all their conduct; that the country was blessed with an opposition of strong force; and that the common people were united with the gentlemen in a column of prudence. From all which he argued, that the present was the moment for crushing this diabolical spirit, and every trivial attempt to subvert the principles of the constitution, ought to be watched with the greatest jealousy and circumspection: when he spoke of our constitution as valuable, he spoke of the whole complete, and not of any particular or predominant part; and therefore thought it wiser to be prepared for any attack that might be made upon it, than to trust that we could preserve it, even after the attack was made. Having dwelt for some time upon this point, he next began to recapitulate the political questions upon which he had differed with the right honorable gentleman on former occasions, particularly the several attempts that had been made for a parliamentary reform, the Dissenters' bill, and the Royal marriage act; perhaps, too, in other instances; but in all these, in the course of their acquaintance and intimacy, no one difference of political opinion had ever for a moment interrupted or affected their friendship. It certainly was indiscretion, at any period, but much greater at his time of life, to provoke enemies, or to give his friends cause to desert him; yet if that was to be the case, by adhering to the British constitution, he would risk all, and as public duty and public prudence taught him, in his last words exclaim, "Fly from the French constitution." [It was whispered by Mr. Fox there was no loss of friends.] Mr. BURKE said, "Yes, —there was a loss of friends; he knew the price of his conduct; he had done his duty at the price of his friend;

their friendship was at an end. He had been told, that it was much better to defend the English constitution by praising its own excellence, than by abusing other constitutions, and certainly the task of praising was much more pleasant than that of abusing ; but he contended, that the only fair way of arguing the merits of any constitution, was by comparing it with others ; and he could not speak with propriety of the excellence of the English constitution, without comparing it with the deformity and injustice of the French, which was the shade that brought its colours forward in the brightest point of view ; and omitting to do it would be like presenting a picture without a shade. He should warn the right honorable gentlemen who were the great rivals in that House, that whether they should in future move in the political hemisphere as two flaming meteors, or walk together as brethren, that they should preserve and cherish the British constitution ; that they should guard against innovation, and save it from the danger of these new theories." In a rapturous apostrophe to the infinite and unspeakable power of the Deity, who, with his arm, hurled a comet like a projectile out of its course—who enabled it to endure the sun's heat, and the pitchy darkness of the chilly night ; he said, that to the Deity must be left the task of infinite perfection, while to us, poor, weak, incapable mortals, there was no rule of conduct so safe as experience. He concluded with moving an amendment, that all the words of the motion, after " Dissertations on the French constitution," should be omitted, and the following be inserted in their room ; " tending to shew that examples might be drawn therefrom ; and to prove that they are insufficient for any good purposes, and that they lead to anarchy and confusion, and are consequently unfit to be introduced into schemes of government, are improper to be referred to on a motion for reading the Quebec bill paragraph by paragraph."

In the course of the preceding speech, Mr. BURKE having said, that Mr. Fox had of late years forborne that friendly intercourse with him, by visits, &c. which he had formerly preserved, the latter, in reply, said, that the omission complained of was purely accidental; that men, at different periods, fell into different habits; and without any intentional neglect, it frequently happened that they did not see their friends so often as they might have done in preceding years; but at the same time, that their friendship was as warm and as sincere as ever.

Mr. BURKE, likewise, while in one of the parts of it, where he was reasoning with great warmth, checked himself, and addressing himself to the chair, said, "I am not mad, most noble FESTUS, but speak the words of truth and soberness."

Mr. Fox rose to reply, but his mind was so much agitated, and his heart so much affected by what had fallen from Mr. BURKE, that it was some minutes before he could proceed. Tears trickled down his cheeks, and he strove in vain to give utterance to feelings that dignified and exalted his nature. In justice to the House, it must be said, that the sensibility of every one present seemed to be uncommonly excited upon the occasion. Being at length recovered from the depression under which he had risen, Mr. Fox proceeded to answer the assertions which had caused it. He said, "however events might have altered the mind of his right honorable friend, for so he must call him, notwithstanding what had passed, because grating as it was to any man to be unkindly treated by those who were under obligations to him, it was still more grating and painful to be unkindly treated by those to whom they felt the greatest obligations, and whom, notwithstanding their harshness and severity, they found they must still love and esteem. He could not forget, that when a boy almost, he had been in the habit of receiving favors from his right honorable friend; that their

friendship had grown with their years, and that it had continued for upwards of twenty-five years, for the last twenty of which they had acted together, and lived on terms of the most familiar intimacy. He hoped, therefore, notwithstanding what had happened on that day, the right honorable gentleman would think on past times, and however any imprudent words or intemperance of his might have offended him, it would shew that it had not been at least intentionally his fault. The right honorable gentleman had said, and said truly, that they had differed formerly on many subjects, and yet it did not interrupt their friendship. Let the right honorable gentleman speak fairly and say, whether they could not differ, without an interruption of their friendship, on the subject of the French revolution, as well as on any of their former subjects of difference. He enumerated severally what those differences of opinion had been, and appealed to his right honorable friend, whether their friendship had been interrupted on any one of these occasions. In particular, he said, on the subject of the French revolution, the right honorable gentleman well knew, that his sentiments differed widely from his own; he knew also, that as soon as his book on the subject was published, he condemned that book both in public and private, and every one of the doctrines it contained. Mr. Fox again explained, that Mr. BURKE's conduct again appeared, as if it sprung from an intention to injure him; at least it produced the same effect, because the right honorable gentleman opposite to him had chosen to talk of republican principles, as principles which he wished to be introduced into the the new constitution of Canada, whereas his principles were very far from republican in any degree. If, therefore, his right honorable friend had thought it necessary to state to the House his sentiments on the French revolution, he might have done it on any other occasion, with less injury to him, than on the Quebec bill, because

his doing it then confirmed and gave weight to the misrepresentation of the right honorable gentleman opposite to him, and not only that, but put it out of his power to answer him properly. Besides he had, as every other man must have, a natural antipathy and dislike to being catechised as to his political principles. It was, he said, the first time that ever he had heard a philosopher state, that the way to do justice to the excellence of the British constitution was never to mention it without at the same time abusing every other constitution in the world. For his part, he had ever thought that the British constitution in theory was imperfect and defective, but that in practice it was excellently adapted to this country. He had often publicly said this. But because he admired the British constitution, was it to be concluded that there was no part of the constitution of other countries worth praising, or that the British constitution was not still capable of improvement? He therefore could neither consent to abuse every other constitution, nor to extol our own so extravagantly, as the right honorable gentleman seemed to think it merited. As a proof that it had not been thought quite perfect, let the two only reforms of it be recollected that had been attempted of late years; the reform relative to the representation in parliament of the right honorable gentleman opposite to him, and the reform in the civil list by his right honorable friend. Was it expected that he should declare the constitution would have been more perfect or better without either of those two reforms? To both had he given his support, because he approved both; and yet they were both tests, one to retrench the influence of the Crown, the other to enlarge the representation in that House; and would the right honorable gentleman say he was a bad man for having voted for both? He was, Mr. Fox said, an enemy to all tests whatever, as he had hitherto thought the right honorable gentleman was, and therefore he objected to

every man's being expected to have his political principles put to the test, by his being obliged to abjure every other constitution but our own. Such a mode of approving one's zeal for the latter, reminded him of the man who signed the thirty-nine articles, and said he wished there were an hundred and thirty-nine more, that he might have signed them too, to prove his orthodoxy. Nothing but the ignominious terms which his right honorable friend had that day heaped upon him—[Mr. BURKE said loud enough to be heard, that he did not recollect that he had used *any*].—"My right honorable friend," said Mr. Fox "does not recollect the epithets; they are out of his mind; then they are completely and for ever out of mine. I cannot cherish a recollection so painful, and, from this moment, they are obliterated and forgotten." Mr. Fox then pursued his argument, "and expressed his surprise that his right honorable friend had talked of the friends who sat near him as a phalanx, and as disciplined troops; if by that he meant that any improper influence had been exercised, or attempted to be exercised, on their minds, he disclaimed the idea; and indeed his right honorable friend best knew, so long as he had acted with them, where any such influence had been exerted over his own mind. He declared he could not but be sorry that such a character of a party, linked together on the most honorable principles, should come from one of their own corps. He had imagined, that his right honorable friend knew more of them than to impute such conduct to men of their description. The fact was, Mr. Fox said, that, upon his honour, no one of the honorable gentlemen near him, who had risen that day, and called his right honorable friend to order, had been desired by him to do so; on the contrary, wherever he thought he was likely to have his application complied with, he had earnestly intreated his friends not to interrupt the right honorable gentleman. He admitted that

no friendship should exist in the way of public duty ; and if his right honorable friend thought he did service to the country by blasting the French revolution, he must do so, but at the same time, he must allow others, who thought differently, to act in a different manner. Mr. Fox alluded to what Mr. BURKE had quoted from MONTESQUIEU, and declared he agreed with MONTESQUIEU in his observation on the British constitution, but could not admit that MONTESQUIEU meant to say that it was a model for all other countries. If he referred to what had passed in 1780, the right honorable gentleman would say that he raked into all the transactions of his life ; Mr. Fox declared he would not, unless it redounded to his honorable friend's honor, and to the glory of his character, and where could he find the incident that did not ? In the year 1780, it had been the opinion of that House, " that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." His right honorable friend had agreed to that resolution, and thereby declared, that the constitution was not perfect without such reduction. Would he not grant to the French the same right that he had himself exercised ? If the influence of the British Crown, which consisted in the civil list, in the army, navy, and the power of giving places and honors, was so great as to be thought dangerous, what in the eyes of reflecting Frenchmen must have been the extravagant influence of the Crown of France ? With a civil list ten times as large as ours ; with a navy almost as large ; an army tenfold ; a church more than tenfold ; must they not, as we had done, pursue the course of diminishing its power ? When in addition to this, they had to deplore the degree of corruption and despotism into which the whole of their government had fallen, was it not right that they should endeavour to better their condition, and to extricate themselves from their misery and slavery ? His right honorable friend had said, that they must not hear of the

French constitution, because it was diametrically opposite to ours; how that could be, he could not easily comprehend. His right honorable friend had also asserted that evil must not be done that good might come out of it; that must be left to God alone. What, Mr. Fox asked, did his right honorable friend think of the occasion of war? War, in itself, was certainly an evil, civil war a moral evil, and yet war was often commenced that good might come out of it. If original rights were totally to be disregarded, Mr. Fox said, he should contend that the resistance of the parliament to CHARLES the first, and the resistance of 1688, had been very unjustifiable; but the original rights of men were, in his opinion, the foundations of all governments, and all constitutions, which were a compact between the governors and the governed, binding on both sides. He would not say that the government of France was good; it was undoubtedly capable of improvement, and would be amended by degrees. How, he asked, did we make our own government? By sending to Greece or Rome for a pattern for our constitution? No! but by gradually improving our government, which was bad at first, and which grew better in proportion as experience suggested alteration. The French would in time experience the defects of their government, and would have the same opportunities of correcting it. With regard to his honorable friend's enthusiastic attachment to our constitution, in preference to all others, did he remember when his Majesty's speech was made in 1783, on the loss of America, in which his Majesty lamented the loss the provinces had sustained, in being deprived of the advantages resulting from a monarchy, how he had ridiculed it, and compared it to a man's opening a door after he had left a room, and saying, "at our parting, pray let me recommend a monarchy to you." In that ridicule, Mr. Fox said, he had joined heartily at the time. The French, he observed, had made

their new government on the best of all principles of a government, viz. the happiness of the people who were to live under it.

“ The French, it should be considered, were a great nation ; they were inferior to England only, in arts, arms, the powers of reasoning, &c. Was it not joyful then that she should have cast off the tyranny of the most horrid despotism, and become free ? Surely we did not wish that liberty should be engrossed by ourselves. If his right honorable friend talked of light and shade, Mr. Fox said, there was no shade so proper for the people of this country, as the departed despotism of France ; of which, though no more in existence, we seemed still to be afraid ; and the French themselves, from the dread of a return of the spectre, did many things which appeared extravagant and absurd to us, who were cool observers of the scene passing in France. A ludicrous image of this was given by the first of our dramatic poets, who makes *FALSTAFF* say, “ I fear this gunpowder *PERCY*, though he be dead.” The right honorable gentleman had said, that he shall lose my friendship, (continued Mr. Fox) but this, I assure him he shall not lose. He has also said, he should lose that of the friends about him, because he stands up for the constitution of this country. I, however, hope that my friends are as fond of that constitution as the right honorable gentleman is, and that the example of France will make them cautious not to run into the same errors, and give the same provocation to the people. With regard to tests, Mr. Fox said, he would not believe his right honorable friend had altered his sentiments on that head, till he saw him voting for one. France had established a complete unequivocal toleration, and he heartily wished that a complete toleration was also established in England. Because troubles had happened at the time the French were changing their constitution, should we say that they would also happen in England,

were any alteration made in our constitution? He must contend for the contrary; and as he thought the British constitution was capable of improvements, so did he think the greatest improvements might be engrafted on it by degrees with success, and without any violation of the public tranquillity. Mr. Fox said, he lamented the difference that had happened, but he hoped, that when his right honorable friend came to turn in his mind all the circumstances that had occasioned it, he would forget what was past. His right honorable friend had said, that if he were to quote some of his expressions on particular occasions, he could prove his inconsistency. Mr. Fox acknowledged that no member of that House was more apt to let expressions fall which, perhaps, were rash and imprudent than he was. He knew he had done so; but his right honorable friend never let any thing fall but what did him honor, and might be remembered to his credit. Mr. Fox now proceeded to speak of the reasons which had induced the right honorable gentleman and himself to enter into a systematic opposition to the present administration; this was not, he said, for the purpose of obtaining power and emolument by the means of a faction, but he had ever understood they and their friends had formed a party for supporting the true principles of the British constitution, and watching the prerogative. After expatiating on this, Mr. Fox said, "Let the right honorable gentleman maintain his opinions, but let him not blame me for having mine."

He then noticed the cruel and hard manner in which his right honorable friend had used him, and spoke feelingly of the pain it had given him. The course, he should pursue, he said, "would be, to keep out of his right honorable friend's way, till time and reflection had fitted him (Mr. BURKE) to think differently on the subject; and then, if their friends did not contrive to unite them, he should think their friends did not act as they had a right to ex-

pect at their hands. If his right honorable friend wished to bring forward the question of the French revolution on a future day, in that case he would discuss it with him as temperately as he could ; at present he had said all that he thought necessary, and let his right honorable friend say what he would more upon the subject, he would make him no farther reply."

Mr. BURKE said, "that tenderness which had been displayed in the beginning and conclusion of the speech, had been completely done away by what had occurred in the middle part. Under the mask of kindness for him, an attempt had been made to injure his character, and attack the whole of his public conduct. The event of this night's debate, in which he had been interrupted, without being suffered to explain, in which he had been accused, and had not been heard, made him at a loss how to understand what was party, or friendship. He had, indeed, as had been alleged, proposed a reduction of the power of the crown ; but he had proposed it only so far as he had considered necessary ; and though his views had not been complied with, no bad consequences had followed. In 1784, an attack had been made, not upon the form, but upon the spirit of the constitution. His opposition to this attack had not been single and unsupported. He had not, indeed, succeeded in procuring a remedy. He knew not, indeed, where the remedy was to be found. The evil arose from the people ; and till they should be made sensible of the disease, how was it possible to apply the means of cure ? He did not expect that his jests, that hasty or careless expressions should have been recorded against him, and mustered up in the form of accusations. And yet all this was done under the mask of friendship. He had been charged with inconsistency ; but he desired there should be shewn one word, one expression, one act or occasion, in which he had discovered the smallest inconsistency. It had been said, that the British constitution

might in some points be amended. But had he affirmed that it, or any other human constitution might not? It had been charged upon him, that he thought it necessary to abuse every other constitution in order to praise the British. But had he ever displayed any such spirit? On the contrary, he should never have thought it necessary to bring forward the French constitution as the subject of animadversion, had not attempts been made to introduce the monster into this country. He had heard the right honorable gentleman, who now appeared as so violent an advocate of the French constitution, say, "that the king of France was the best intentioned sovereign in Europe." This king might now be said to be in jail. In consequence of his good nature, indeed, he had been ruined. He had gone on from concession to concession—from the grant of one indulgence to another, till at last he found himself deprived by his subjects of his own rights, thus holding out a memorable lesson to all monarchs to be watchful in preserving their privileges, and cautious in guarding against the incroachments of their subjects. Political truth, it had been said, gains by discussion, but it was surely not that sort of discussion which had taken place that evening, in which his facts had not been allowed to be produced, and his arguments had not been heard. A serious danger, as he had stated before, and would now repeat, was to be apprehended from the introduction of the principles of the new constitution into this country. If there should be formed in this country a party, however small, who might join with those abroad, what evils might not ensue? However small might be the party inimical to the constitution in this country, yet they were not less to be dreaded; they would not want the support of numbers. The constitution of this country leans to monarchy; it was necessary that all parts of it should be defended together. All the parts of the constitution had now been attacked. Libels were circulated against the constitution

by societies, who assumed the name of constitutional.—Nay, libels were circulated through the country, in the name of the crown, and under the pretended sanction of his Majesty's ministers, and from that authority recommended to the perusal and attention of the people. Such libels, issued in the name of the crown, and eagerly devoured by the ignorant and hot-headed multitude, had been, in a great measure, the source of the evils in France, and their progress was to be guarded against in this country. The new constitution in France had been called a stupendous fabric of wisdom. He had thought that the right honorable gentleman had possessed a better taste in architecture, than to bestow this magnificent epithet on a building composed of untempered mortar. For his own part, when he saw the new temple, he wept. He considered it as the work of Goths and Vandals, where every thing was out of place, disjointed, and inverted. It had been said, that he did not love tests; yet if his intimacy should be renewed with the right honorable gentleman, he might explain to him, that it was necessary that some evil should be suffered in order to obtain a greater good. In France, it had been asserted by the right honorable gentleman, prevailed the largest religious toleration. It would be judged of what nature was that toleration, when it was understood that there the most cruel tests were imposed. Nay, tests were imposed for the most inhuman of all purposes, in order to deprive those of whom they were exacted of their bread. The treatment of the nuns was almost too shocking to be mentioned. These wretched girls, who could only be actuated by the most exalted religious enthusiasm, were engaged in the most painful office of humanity, in the most sacred duty of piety, visiting and attending the hospitals. Yet these had been dragged into the streets; these had been scourged by the sovereigns of the French nation, because the priest from whom they had received the sacrament, had not submitted to the test.

This proceeding had passed not only unpunished, but uncensured. Yet, in the country, in which such proceedings had happened, had been said to subsist the largest religious toleration. The present state of France was ten times worse than tyranny. The new constitution was said to be an experiment ; but it was not true. It had already been tried, and been found to be only productive of evils. They would go on from tyranny to tyranny, from oppression to oppression, till at last the whole system would terminate in the ruin and destruction of that miserable and deluded people. He stated that his opinion of the revolution in America did not at all militate with his opinion of the revolution of France. In that instance, he considered that the people had some reason for the conduct which they had pursued. There was an expression of his, which had been taken exception at,—“well disciplined troops.” He only meant that every body of men who acted upon a method, and in concert, were well-disciplined. He was sorry for the present occasion. Sufficient to the day was the evil thereof. Yet let the evil be to him, if the good was to many. He hoped that they would not barter the constitution of this country, the eternal jewel of their souls, for a wild and visionary system, which could only lead to confusion and disorder. With regard to pretences of friendship, he must own that he did not like them, where his character and public conduct, as in the present instance, had been so materially attacked and injured. The French principles in this country, he had been told, would come to some head. It would then be perceived what were their consequences. Several gentlemen were young enough to see a change. They would be enterprising enough to act a part. It would then be seen whether they would be borne on the top, or encumbered in the gravel. In going along with the current, they would most certainly be forced to exc-

cute and approve many things very contrary to their own nature and character."

In the first volume we inserted Mr. Fox's translation into popular language of his own much admired parliamentary speech in moving an amendment to the address in December 1792; but the question between him and the minister was brought to a more decisive issue in the debate preparatory to an actual declaration of war in February 1793, when the order of the day being moved for taking into consideration His Majesty's message of the 28th of January, it was read by the Speaker as follows:

GEORGE R.

"His Majesty has given directions for laying before the House of Commons, copies of several papers which have been received from M. CHAUVELIN, late minister plenipotentiary from the Most Christian King, by His Majesty's secretary of state for foreign affairs, and of the answers returned thereto; and likewise the copy of an order made by His Majesty in council, and transmitted by His Majesty's commands to the said M. CHAUVELIN, in consequence of the accounts of the atrocious act recently perpetrated at Paris.

"In the present situation of affairs, His Majesty thinks it indispensably necessary to make a farther augmentation of his forces by sea and land; and relies on the known affection and zeal of the House of Commons to enable His Majesty to take the most effectual measures, in the present important conjuncture, for maintaining the security and rights of his own dominions; for supporting his allies; and for opposing views of aggrandizement and ambition on the part of France, which would be at all times dangerous to the general interests of Europe, but are peculiarly so, when connected with the propagation of principles which lead to the violation of the most sacred duties, and are utterly subversive of the peace and order of all civil society."

Mr. PITT then rose :

" SIR, I shall now submit to the House some observations on the many important objects which arise out of the communication of His Majesty's message, and out of the present situation of this country. And in proceeding to the consideration of that message, the attention of the House should in the first instance be strongly directed to that calamitous event, to that dreadful outrage against every principle of religion, of justice, and of humanity, which has created one general sentiment of indignation and abhorrence in every part of this island, and most undoubtedly has produced the same effect in every civilized country.

" At the same time, I am aware, that I should better consult not only my own feelings, but those of the House, if considerations of duty would permit me to draw a veil over the whole of this transaction, because it is, in fact, in itself, in all those circumstances which led to it, and in all which have followed, or which are likely to follow it hereafter, so full of every subject of grief and horror, that it is painful for the mind to dwell upon it. It is a subject which, for the honor of human nature, it would be better, if possible, to dismiss from our memories, to expunge from the page of history, and to conceal it, both now and hereafter, from the observation of the world.

" *Excidat ille dies ævo, neu postera credant*

" *Secula; nos certè taceamus, et obruta multa*

" *Nocte tegi nostræ patiamur crimina gentis."*

" These Sir, are the words of a great historian of France in a former period, and were applied to an occasion which has always been considered as an eternal reproach to the French nation; and the atrocious acts lately perpetrated at Paris are, perhaps, the only instances that furnish any match to that dreadful and complicated scene

of proscription and blood. But whatever may be our feelings on this subject, since, alas ! it is not possible that the present age should not be contaminated with its guilt ; since it is not possible that the knowledge of it should not be conveyed by the breath of tradition to posterity, there is a duty which we are called upon to perform—to enter our solemn protestation, that, on every principle by which men of justice and honor are actuated, it is the foulest and most atrocious deed which the history of the world has yet had occasion to attest.

“ There is another duty immediately relating to the interest of this and of every other country. Painful as it is to dwell upon this deed, since we cannot conceal what has happened, either from the view of the present age or of posterity, let us not deprive this nation of the benefit that may be derived from reflecting on some of the dreadful effects of those principles which are entertained and propagated with so much care and industry by a neighbouring country. We see in this one instance concentrated together, the effect of principles, which originally rest upon grounds that dissolve whatever has hitherto received the best sanctions of human legislation, which are contrary to every principle of law human and divine. Presumptuously relying on their deceitful and destructive theories, they have rejected every benefit which the world has hitherto received from the effect either of reason, experience, or even of Revelation itself. The consequences of these principles have been illustrated by having been carried into effect in the single person of one, whom every human being commiserates. Their consequences equally tend to shake the security of commerce, to rob the meanest individual in every country of whatever is most dear and valuable to him. They strike directly against the authority of all regular government, and the inviolable personal situation of every lawful sovereign. I do feel it, therefore, not merely a tribute due to humanity, not merely

an effusion of those feelings which I possess in common with every man in this country, but I hold it to be a proper subject of reflection to fix our minds on the effects of those principles which have been thus dreadfully attested, before we proceed to consider of the measures which it becomes this country to adopt, in order to avert their contagion, and to prevent their growth and progress in Europe.

“ However, notwithstanding that I feel strongly on this subject, I would, if possible, entreat of the House to consider that calamitous event rather as a subject of reason and reflection, than of sentiment and feeling. * Sentiment is often unavailing ; but reason and reflection will lead to that knowledge which is necessary to the salvation of this and of all other countries. I am persuaded the House will not feel this as a circumstance which they are to take upon themselves, but that they will feel it in the manner in which I state it as a proof of the calamities arising out of the most abominable and detestable principles ; as a proof of the absence of all morals, of all justice, of all humanity, and of every principle which does honor to human nature ; and, that it furnishes the strongest demonstration of the dreadful outrage which the crimes and follies of a neighbouring nation have suggested to them. I am persuaded that the House will be sensible that these principles and the effects of them are narrowly to be watched ; that there can be no leading consideration more nearly connected with the prospect of all countries, and most of all, that there can be no consideration more deserving the attention of this House, than to crush and destroy principles which are so dangerous and destructive of every blessing this country enjoys under its free and excellent constitution. We owe our present happiness and prosperity, which has never been equalled in the annals of mankind, to a mixture of monarchical government. We feel and know we are happy under that form of government. We

consider it as our first duty to maintain and reverence the British constitution, which for wise and just reasons of lasting and internal policy, attaches inviolability to the sacred person of the Sovereign, though, at the same time, by the responsibility it has annexed to government, by the check of a wise system of laws, and by a mixture of aristocratic and democratical power in the frame of legislation, it has equally exempted itself from the danger arising from the exercise of absolute power on the one hand, and the still more dangerous contagion of popular licentiousness on the other. The equity of our laws, and the freedom of our political system, have been the envy of every surrounding nation. In this country no man, in consequence of his riches or rank, is so high as to be above the reach of the laws, and no individual is so poor or inconsiderable as not to be within their protection. It is the boast of the law of England, that it affords equal security and protection to the high and to the low, to the rich and to the poor.

“ Such is the envied situation of England, which may be compared, if I may be allowed the expression, to the situation of the temperate zone on the surface of the globe, formed by the bounty of Providence for habitation and enjoyment, being equally removed from the polar frosts on the one hand, and the scorching heat of the torrid zone on the other ; where the vicissitude of the seasons, and the variety of the climate, contribute to the vigor and health of its inhabitants, and to the fertility of its soil ; where pestilence and famine are unknown, as also earthquakes, hurricanes, &c. with all their dreadful consequences. Such is the situation, the fortunate situation of Britain ; and what a splendid contrast does it form to the situation of that country, which is exposed to all the tremendous consequences of that ungovernable, that intolerable and destroying spirit, which carries ruin and desolation wherever it goes !

“ Sir, this infection can have no existence in this happy land, unless it is imported, unless it is studiously and industriously brought into this country. These principles are not the natural produce of Great Britain, and it ought to be our first duty, and principal concern, to take the most effectual measures in order to stop their growth and progress in this country, as well as in the other nations of Europe.

“ Under this impression, I wish to bring the House to the consideration of the situation in which we stand with respect to France, and with respect to the general state of the different powers of Europe. This subject was very much discussed on the first day of the present session, and I had the good fortune to concur with a very large majority of the House in the address that was presented to His Majesty for his most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament. Gentlemen then drew their inferences from those notorious facts which every man's observation presented to him; and those circumstances were supposed to excite every sentiment of jealousy and precaution. They induced the House to arm His Majesty, and the executive government, with those powers which were indispensably necessary for effectually providing for the safety of the country. Many weeks have now elapsed since the beginning of the session, when the country appeared to be in a critical situation. Let us consider what are the circumstances now to attract our attention at the moment when the message of His Majesty calls on us for farther decision. The papers which contain the communication between this country and France, consist of two different parts. The one comprehends the communication between this country and France, prior to the period which attracted those sentiments of jealousy I have stated: This part also contains those comments which have taken place since, and those explanations which have been entered into by His Ma-

jeisty's permission, with a view, if possible, that our jealousy might be removed in consequence of some step that might be taken. The other part consists, either of what were notorious facts at the meeting of parliament, or of those notorious facts, which though not officially communicated by His Majesty, were very generally known to the public. The first part of these papers has never before been made public. The date of the first communication is May 12th 1792. And the communication from that period till the 8th of July contains the system on which His Majesty acted between France and the other European powers. From that period, down to the meeting of parliament, His Majesty had most scrupulously observed the strictest neutrality with respect to France. He had taken no part whatever in the regulation of her internal government. He had given her no cause of complaint; and therefore the least return he might expect, was, that France would be cautious to avoid every measure that could furnish any just ground of complaint to His Majesty. He might also well expect that France would have felt a proper degree of respect for the rights of himself and his allies. His Majesty might most of all expect that, in the troubled state of that country, they would not have chosen to attempt an interference with the internal government of this country, for the sole purpose of creating dissention among us, and of disturbing a scene of unexampled felicity. But fortunately for this country, they did not succeed. The express assurances contained in the papers which have been printed, and are now on the table, the very compact on the part of France does distinctly and precisely apply to every one of these points.

“ I have no doubt but gentlemen have applied the interval in perusing these papers with sufficient attention, to make it unnecessary for me to trouble them with more than the leading points. You will perceive, that the very

first communication is from M. CHAUVELIN, May 12th 1792, and contains this passage :

“ Thus the King (of France) saw himself forced into a war, which was already declared against him ; but religiously faithful to the principles of the constitution, whatever may finally be the fate of arms in this war, France rejects all ideas of aggrandizement. She will preserve her limits, her liberty, her constitution, her unalienable right of reforming herself whenever she may think proper : she will never consent that, under any relation, foreign powers should attempt to dictate, or even dare to nourish a hope of dictating laws to her. But this very pride, so natural and so great, is a sure pledge to all the powers from whom she shall have received no provocation, not only of her constantly pacific dispositions, but also of the respect which the French well know how to shew at all times for the laws, the customs, and all the forms of government of different nations.

“ The King indeed wishes it to be known, that he would publicly and severely disavow all those of his agents at foreign courts in peace with France, who should dare to depart an instant from that respect, either by fomenting or favoring insurrections against the established order, or by interfering in any manner whatever in the interior policy of such states, under pretence of a proselytism, which, exercised in the dominions of friendly powers, would be a real violation of the law of nations.”

“ This paper therefore contains a declaration, that whatever might be the fate of arms, France rejected all ideas of aggrandizement ; she would preserve her rights, she would preserve her limits and her liberty. This declaration was made in the name of the King. Gentlemen must remember, after the first Revolution, and after the establishment of what they called the model of a government of liberty, the King wished it to be known, that he would publicly disavow all those of his agents at foreign

courts, in peace with France, who should dare to depart an instant from that respect, either by fomenting or raising insurrections, or by interfering in any manner whatever in the internal government of such states, under pretence of proselytism, which would be a real violation of the law of nations. They have therefore passed, by anticipation, that sentence on their own conduct; and whether we shall pass a different sentence, is one of the objects of this day's consideration.

“ In the passage I have read, two distinct principles are laid down: the one, that whatever might be the fate of arms, France renounced all ideas of aggrandizement, and declared she would confine herself within her own territories; the other, that to foment and raise insurrections in neutral states, under pretence of proselytism, was a violation of the law of nations. It is evident to all Europe, her conduct has been directly the reverse of those principles, both of which she has trampled under foot in every instance where it was in her power. In the answer to that note of M. CHAUVELIN, His Majesty expresses his concern for the war that had arisen, for the situation of his most Christian Majesty, and for the happiness of his dominions. He also gives him a positive assurance of his readiness to fulfil, in the most exact manner, the stipulations of the treaty of navigation and commerce; and concludes with these words:

“ Faithful to all his engagements, His Majesty will pay the strictest attention to the preservation of the good understanding which so happily subsists between him and his most Christian Majesty, expecting with confidence, that, animated with the same sentiments, his most Christian Majesty will not fail to contribute to the same end, by causing, on his part, the rights of His Majesty and his allies to be respected, and by rigorously forbidding any step which might affect the friendship which His

Majesty has ever desired to consolidate and perpetuate, for the happiness of the two empires."

"We may also see what general assurances France thought fit to make to Great Britain, from a note from M. CHAUVELIN to lord GRENVILLE, date June 8th, 1792; where it is said,

"The King of the French is happy to renew to the King of Great Britain the formal assurance, that every thing which can interest the rights of His Britannic Majesty will continue to be the object of his most particular and most scrupulous attention.

"He hastens, at the same time, to declare to him, that the rights of all the allies of Great Britain, who shall not have provoked France by hostile measures, shall by him be no less religiously respected.

"In making, or rather renewing this declaration the King of the French enjoys the double satisfaction of expressing the wish of a people, in whose eyes every war, which is not rendered necessary by a due attention to its defence, is essentially unjust, and of joining particularly in the wishes of His Majesty for the tranquillity of Europe, which would never be disturbed, if France and England would unite in order to preserve it."

"Such then, Sir, is the situation, in which His Majesty stands with respect to France. During the transactions of the last summer, when France was engaged in a war against the powers of Austria and Prussia, His Majesty departed in no shape from that neutrality. His Majesty did no one act from which it could be justly inferred, that he was friendly to that system. But what, let me ask the House, has been the conduct of France as to those express reiterated assurances, applied to the public concerns which I have now detailed?

"These assurances went to three points: to a determination to abstain from views of aggrandizement; not to interfere with the government of neutral nations, which

they admitted to be a violation of the law of nations ; and to observe the rights of His Majesty and his allies. What has been the conduct of France on these three points, under the new system ? She has both by her words and actions manifested a determination, if not checked by force, to act on principles of aggrandizement. She has completely disclaimed that maxim ' that whatever was the fate of their arms in war, France rejected all ideas of aggrandisement.' She has made use of the first moment of success to publish a contradiction to that declaration. She has made use of the first instance of success in Savoy, without even attempting the ceremony of disguise, (after having professed a determination to confine herself within her ancient limits,) to annex it for ever as an eighty-fourth department to the present sovereignty of France. They have by their decree announced a determination to carry on a similar operation in every country into which their arms can be carried, with a view, in substance, if not in name, to do the same thing in every country where they can with success. Their decree of the 15th of December contains a fair illustration and confirmation of their principles and designs. They have by that decree expressly stated the plan on which they mean to act. Whenever they obtain a temporary success, whatever be the situation of the country into which they come, whatever may have been its antecedent conduct, whatever may be its political connections, they have determined not to abandon the possession of it, till they have effected the utter and absolute subversion of its form of government, of every ancient, every established usage, however long they may have existed, and however much they may have been revered. They will not accept, under the name of liberty, any model of government, but that which is conformable to their own opinions and ideas ; and all men must learn from the mouth of their cannon the propagation of their system in every part of the world.

They have regularly and boldly avowed these instructions, which they sent to the commissioners who were to carry these orders into execution. They have stated to them what this House could not believe;—they have stated to them a revolutionary principle and order, for the purpose of being applied in every country in which the French arms are crowned with success. They have stated that they would organize every country by a disorganizing principle; and afterwards they tell you all this is done by the will of the people. Wherever our arms come, revolutions must take place, dictated by the will of the people. And then comes this plain question, what is this will of the people? It is the power of the French. They have explained what that liberty is, which they wish to give to every nation; and if they will not accept of it voluntarily, they compel them. They take every opportunity to destroy every institution that is most sacred and most valuable in every nation where their armies have made their appearance; and, under the name of liberty, they have resolved to make every country in substance, if not in form, a province dependant on themselves, through the despotism of Jacobin societies. This has given a more fatal blow to the liberties of mankind, than any they have suffered, even from the boldest attempts of the most aspiring monarch. We see, therefore, that France has trampled under foot all laws human and divine. She has at last avowed the most insatiable ambition, and greatest contempt for the law of nations, which all independent states have hitherto professed most religiously to observe; and unless she is stopped in her career, all Europe must soon learn their ideas of justice—law of nations—models of government—and principles of liberty from the mouth of the French cannon.

“ I gave the first instance of their success in Savoy, as a proof of their ambition and aggrandizement. I wish the House to attend to the practical effect of their system,

in the situation of the Netherlands. You will find in some of the correspondence between France and this country, this declaration on the part of France.

“She has renounced, and again renounces every conquest; and her occupation of the Low Countries shall only continue during the war, and the time which may be necessary to the Belgians to ensure and consolidate their liberty; after which, they will be independent and happy. France will find her recompense in their felicity.”

“I ask whether this can mean any thing else, than that they hope to add the Netherlands, as an 84th or 85th department, to the French Republic; whether it does not mean a subjugation of the Netherlands to the absolute power of France, to a total and unequalled dependence on her? If any man entertains doubts upon this subject, let him look at the allegations of DUMOURIER, enforced by martial law. What was the conduct of this general, when he arrived at Brussels? Did he not assemble the inhabitants in the most public part of the city to elect the primary assemblies? How agreeable must have been his arrival in the Netherlands, by his employing threats to procure a general illumination on his entrance into Brussels! A hollow square of the French troops was drawn round the tree of liberty, to prevent the natives from pulling down the emblem of French freedom. This shews how well disposed the people were to receive the French system of liberty! This is the manner in which their principles are carried into effect in the different countries of Europe. I may here mention the conduct of the Convention, on the occasion of an address from the people of Mons, in which they desire that the province of Hainault might be added as an 85th department of France. The Convention referred the address to a committee, to report the form in which countries wishing to unite with France, were to be admitted into the union. The Convention could not decide upon it, and

therefore they sent it to a committee to point out the manner in which they were to make their application for that purpose, so that the receiving of them was to be a fixed and standing principle, which in its consequences, if not timely prevented, must destroy the liberties and independence of England, as well as of all Europe.

“ I would next proceed to their confirmed pledge, not to interfere in the government of other neutral countries. What they have done here is in countries which, under some pretence or other, they have made their enemies. I need not remind the House of the decree of the 19th of November, which is a direct attack on every government in Europe, by encouraging the seditious of all nations to rise up against their lawful rulers, and by promising them their support and assistance. By this decree they hold out an encouragement to insurrection and rebellion in every country in the world. They shew you they mean no exception, by ordering this decree to be printed in all languages. And, therefore, I might ask any man of common sense, whether any nation upon earth could be out of their contemplation at the time that they passed it? And whether it was not meant to extend to England, whatever might be their pretences to the contrary? It is most manifest they mean to carry their principles into every nation without exception, to subvert and destroy every government, and to plant on their ruins the sacred tree of liberty.

“ Some observations, to which they have affected to give the name of explanations, have been applied to this decree, and are these :

“ Now to come to the three points which can alone make an object of difficulty at the court of London, the executive council observe respecting the first, which is the decree of the 19th of November, that we have not been properly understood by the ministry of his Britannic Majesty, when they accuse us of having given an expla-

nation which announces to the seditious of all nations, what are the cases in which they may previously count on the support and assistance of France. Nothing could be more foreign than this reproach to the sentiments of the National Convention, to the explanation we have given of them ; and we did not think it was possible we should be charged with the open design of favoring the seditious, at the very moment when we declare that it would be wronging the National Convention, if they were charged with the project of protecting insurrections, and with the commotions that may break out in any corner of a state, of joining the ringleaders, and of thus making the cause of a few private individuals that of the French nation.

“ We have said, and we desire to repeat it, that the decree of the 19th of November could not have any application, unless to the single case in which the GENERAL WILL of a nation, clearly and unequivocally expressed, should call the French nation to its assistance and fraternity. Sedition can certainly never be construed into the GENERAL WILL. These two ideas mutually repel each other ; since a sedition is not, and cannot be any other than the movement of a small number against the nation at large ; and this movement would cease to be seditious, provided all the members of a society should at once rise, either to reform its government, or to change its form *in toto*, or for any other object.

“ The Dutch were assuredly not seditious, when they formed the generous resolution of shaking off the yoke of Spain ; and when the general will of that nation called for the assistance of France, it was not reputed a crime in HENRY IV. or ELIZABETH of England, to have listened to them. The knowledge of the GENERAL WILL is the only basis of the transactions of nations with each other ; and we can only treat with any government whatever on this principle, that such a government is deemed *the organ of the GENERAL WILL of the nation governed.*

“ Thus, when by this natural interpretation, the decree of the 19th of November is reduced to what it truly implies, it will be found, that it announces nothing more than an act of the general will, and that beyond any doubt so effectually founded in right, that it was scarcely worth the trouble to express it. On this account, the executive council thinks that the evidence of this right might, perhaps, have been dispensed with, by the national Convention, and did not deserve to be made the object of a particular decree ; but with the interpretation that precedes it, it cannot give uneasiness to any nation whatever.”

“ To all this I shall only observe, that in the whole context of their language, on every occasion, they shew the clearest intention to propagate their principles all over the world. Their explanations contain only an avowal and repetition of the offence. They have proscribed royalty as a crime, and will not be satisfied, but with its total destruction. The dreadful sentence, which they have executed on their own unfortunate monarch, applies to every sovereign now existing. And lest you should not be satisfied that they mean to extend their system to this country, the conduct of the National Convention has applied itself, by repeated acts, to yourselves by name, which makes any explanation on their part unsatisfactory and unavailing. There is no society in England, however contemptible in their numbers, however desperate their principles, and questionable in their existence, who professed treason and disloyalty, who were not cherished, justified, and applauded, and treated even with a degree of theatrical extravagance at the bar of the National Convention. You have also a list of the answers given to them at that bar. And after all this, am I to ask you, whether England is one of the countries into which they wish to introduce a spirit of proselytism, which exercised in the dominions of friendly powers, they themselves admit, would be a violation of the law of nations ?

“ On the third point it is unnecessary for me to expatiate—I mean on the violation of the rights of His Majesty, or of allies.

“ To insist upon the opening of the river Scheldt is an act of itself, in which the French nation had no right to interfere at all, unless she was the sovereign of the Low Countries, or boldly professed herself the general arbitress of Europe. This singular circumstance was an aggravation of their case, because they were bound by the faith of solemn and recent treaties to secure to the Dutch the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt, and to have opposed the opening of that river, if any other power had attempted it. If France were the sovereign of the Low Countries, she would only succeed to the rights which were enjoyed by the house of Austria; and if she possessed the sovereignty, with all its advantages, she must also take it with all its incumbrances, of which the shutting up of the Scheldt was one. France can have no right to annul the stipulations relative to the Scheldt, unless she has also the right to set aside equally, all the other treaties between all the powers of Europe, and all the other rights of England, or of her allies. England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling, at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a natural right of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by the consent of all the powers. Such a violation of rights as France has been guilty of it, it would be difficult to find in the history of the world. The conduct of that nation is in the highest degree arbitrary, capricious, and founded upon no one principle of reason or justice. They declare this treaty was antiquated, and extorted by despotism, or procured by corruption. But what happened recently in the last year? This new and enlightened nation renewed her assurances of respecting all the rights of all His Majesty's allies, without any ex-

ception, without any reservation, so that the advancement of this claim is directly contrary to their recent professions. From the treaty of Munster, down to the year 1785, the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt has been one of the established rights of Holland. We are told it is to be said no formal requisition has been made by Holland for the support of this country. I beg gentlemen to consider, whether ships going up the Scheldt, after a protest of the States General was not such an act as to have justified them in calling upon this country for a contingent of men. If this House means substantial good faith to its engagements, if it retains a just sense of the solemn faith of treaties, it must shew a determination to support them. Without entering too far upon this subject, let me call to their attention for a moment, one circumstance—I mean the sudden effect and progress of French ambition, and of French arms. If from that circumstance, Holland had just reason to be afraid to make a formal requisition; if she had seen just reason not to do what she might have been well justified in doing, that was no reason why we should not observe our treaty. Are we to stand by as indifferent spectators, and look at France trampling upon the ancient treaties of the allies of this country? Are we to view with indifference the progress of French ambition, and of French arms, by which our allies are exposed to the greatest danger? This is surely no reason for England to be inactive and slothful. If Holland has not immediately called upon us for our assistance and support, she may have been influenced by motives of policy, and her forbearance ought not to be supposed to arise from her indifference about the river Scheldt. If Holland had not applied to England when Antwerp was taken, the French might have over-run her territory. And unless we wish to stand by, and to suffer state after state to be subverted under the power of France, we must now declare our firm resolution effectually to

oppose those principles of ambition and aggrandizement, which have for their object the destruction of England, of Europe, and of the world.

“The next thing is, whether we see any thing in these papers, which furnishes an answer to the past, or gives any security for the future? What does the explanation amount to on the subject of the treaty of our allies? It refers to the possibility of negotiation at an indefinite period. She says, ‘she (France) has renounced, and again renounces every conquest, and her occupation of the Low Countries shall only continue during the war, and the time which may be necessary to the Belgians to ensure and consolidate their liberty; after which they will be independent and happy, and France will find her recompense in their felicity.’ What is this but an avowal of their former declarations?

“On the subject of interference with neutral nations, there is one or two explanations of the decree of the 19th of November, which has been so often discussed. We are, indeed, told it is injurious to suppose the National Convention could have intended to apply this decree to any country but where, by the public will, they have been called to give assistance and fraternity. This is in fact to advertise for treason and rebellion. Is there any man who could give credit to the reception which the English societies received in France? Though their numbers are too contemptible for the animadversion of the law, or the notice of our own executive government, they were considerable enough for the National Convention. They tell you they are the clear, undisputed, constituted organ of the will of the people at large. What reliance can be placed on all their explanations, after the avowal of principles to the last degree dangerous to the liberty, the constitution, the independence, and the very existence of this country?

“My time and my strength would fail me, if I were to attempt to go through all those various circumstances,

which are connected with this subject. I shall take the liberty of reading a passage from a publication, which came into my hands this morning, and I am extremely glad to have seen collected together, so many instances in which the conduct of France is detected. In a note from M. CHAUVELIN, dated December the 27th, 1792, he complains of the harsh construction which the British ministry had put on the conduct of France, and professes the strongest friendship for Great Britain. And yet, on the 31st of December, 1792, that is in four days after, one of the members of the executive council, who had given these assurances to England, wrote this letter to the friends of liberty and equality in all the sea-ports in France.

“The government of England is arming, and the king of Spain encouraged by this, is preparing to attack us. These two tyrannical powers, after persecuting the patriots in their own territories, think, no doubt, that they shall be able to influence the judgment to be pronounced on the tyrant Louis. They hope to frighten us. But no! a people who has made itself free; a people who has driven out of the bosom of France, and as far as the distant borders of the Rhine, the terrible army of the Prussians and Austrians; the people of France will not suffer laws to be dictated to them by a tyrant. The king and his parliament mean to make war against us! Will the English republicans suffer it? Already these freemen shew their discontent, and the repugnance which they have to bear arms against their brothers, the French. Well! we will fly to their succour; we will make a descent on the island; we will lodge there fifty thousand caps of liberty; we will plant there the sacred tree; and we will stretch out our arms to our republican brethren: *the tyranny of their government will soon be destroyed*. Let every one of us be strongly impressed with this idea.—MONGE.”—Such is the declaration of the sentiments of the minister of marine: a declaration which separates not only the king, but the king

and parliament of Great Britain from the people who are called republicans. What faith can be put in assurances given on the part of France by M. CHAUVELIN, on the 27th of December, when in four days after, we find the minister of marine writing such a letter? It was to be hoped we might have seen reasons, perhaps, in consequence of friendly explanations, for not going to war. But such explanations as this communication contains have been justly rejected. I shall not detain the House longer on this subject.

“ I shall state now what appears to be the state of the negociation. I take the conduct of France to be inconsistent with the peace and liberty of Europe. They have not given us satisfaction with respect to the question in issue. It is true, what they call explanations have taken place: but their principles, and the whole manner of their conduct, are such that no faith can be put in their declarations. Their conduct gives the lie to their public professions; and instead of giving satisfaction on the different articles, on which you have a right to claim a clear and precise explanation, and shewing any desire to abandon those views of conquest and aggrandizement, to return within their ancient limits, and to set barriers to the progress of their destructive arms, and to their principles still more destructive; instead of doing so, they have given—explanations I cannot call them, but an avowal of those very things you complain of. And in the last paper from M. CHAUVELIN, which may therefore be considered as the *ultimatum*, are these words: “ After so frank a declaration, which manifests such a sincere desire of peace, his Britannic Majesty’s ministers ought not to have any doubts with regard to the intentions of France. If her explanations appear insufficient, and if we are still obliged to hear a haughty language; if hostile preparations are continued in the English ports, after having exhausted every means to preserve peace, we will

prepare for war, with the sense of the justice of our cause, and of our efforts to avoid this extremity. We will fight the English, whom we esteem, with regret, but we will fight them without fear.”—“This is an *ultimatum* to which you cannot accede. They have neither withdrawn their armies from the neighbouring nations, nor shewn the least disposition to withdraw them. If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must shew herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandizement, and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights. And unless she consent to these terms, whatever may be our wishes for peace, the final issue must be war. As to the time, as to the moment when war is to commence, if there is yet any possibility of satisfactory explanation, and security for the future, it is not to the last moment precluded. But I should disguise my sentiments to the House, if I stated, that I thought it in any degree probable. This country has always been desirous of peace. We desire it still, but such as may be real and solid, and consistent with the interests and dignity of Britain, and with the general security of Europe. War, whenever it comes, will be preferable to peace without honor, without security, and which is incompatible either with the external safety, or the internal happiness of this country.

“I have endeavoured to comprehend as much as possible, though I am sensible I have left a great deal untouched. If any topic should afterwards arise, I trust I shall meet with the indulgence of the House in stating it. I shall now move, “That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message, and the communication of the papers, which by His Majesty’s command have been laid before us.

“ To offer His Majesty our heart-felt condolence on the atrocious act lately perpetrated at Paris, which must be viewed by every nation in Europe as an outrage on religion, justice, and humanity, and as a striking and dreadful example of the effects of principles which lead to the violation of the most sacred duties, and are utterly subversive of the peace and order of all civil society.

“ To represent to His Majesty, that it is impossible for us not to be sensible of the views of aggrandizement and ambition which, in violation of repeated and solemn professions, have been openly manifested on the part of France, and which are connected with the propagation of principles incompatible with the existence of all just and regular government; that under the present circumstances, we consider a vigorous and effectual opposition to those views, as essential to the security of every thing that is most dear and valuable to us as a nation, and to the future tranquillity and safety of all other countries.

“ That impressed with these sentiments, we shall, with the utmost zeal and alacrity, afford His Majesty the most effectual assistance, to enable His Majesty to make a further augmentation of his forces by sea and land, and to act as circumstances may require in the present important conjuncture, for maintaining the security and honor of his crown, for supporting the just rights of his allies, and for preserving to his people the undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings, which, under the divine Providence, they receive from the British constitution.”

Mr. Fox said, “ that although some words had fallen from the right honourable gentleman [Mr. PITT] which might lead him to think that war was not absolutely determined upon, yet the general tenor and impression of his speech was such as to induce him to enter somewhat at large into the subject—as to convince him that there never was a time when the duty, not merely to his immediate constituents, but to the whole people of Great

Britain, of whom the members of that House were individually and collectively the virtual representatives, more imperiously called upon him, and upon every man, to speak out and declare his sentiments frankly and fairly. The misrepresentations and misconstructions of what he and those who thought as he did, had already said in the course of the present session, left him no room to doubt, that what he now must say, would be equally, and perhaps as successfully misrepresented and misconstrued. This only served to shew, that they were only on a service of honor as well as danger ; but if misrepresentation and calumny were to deter him from delivering opinions, because they might be unpopular, from deprecating a war with France, as an evil to be avoided by every possible means consistent with the honor and safety of us and our allies, he should basely betray his trust to his constituents and his country.

“ The right honorable gentleman had introduced the several grounds of dispute with France, ably and accurately ; but the reasons for going to war, he did not mean to say for arming, had not been very accurately treated. The crimes, the murders, and the massacres that had been committed in France, he did not view with less horror, he did not consider as less atrocious than those who made them the perpetual theme of their declamation, although he put them entirely out of the question in the present debate. The condemnation and execution of the king he pronounced an act as disgraceful as any that history recorded ; and whatever opinions he might at any time have expressed in private conversation, he had expressed none certainly in that House, on the justice of bringing kings to trial ; revenge being unjustifiable, and punishment useless, where it could not operate either by way of prevention or example ; he did not view with less detestation the injustice and inhumanity that had been committed towards that unhappy monarch. Not only

were the rules of criminal justice, rules that more than any other ought to be strictly observed, violated with respect to him ; not only was he tried and condemned, without any existing law to which he was personally amenable, and even contrary to laws which did actually exist, but the degrading circumstances of his imprisonment, the unnecessary and insulting asperity with which he had been treated, the total want of republican magnanimity in the whole transaction, (for even in that House it could be no offence to say, that there might be such a thing as magnanimity in a republic,) added every aggravation to the inhumanity and injustice. Now having said all this, as the genuine expression of his feelings and his reason, he saw neither propriety nor wisdom in that House passing judgment on any act committed in another nation, which had no direct reference to us. The general maxim of policy always was, that the crimes perpetrated in one independent state were not cognizable by another. Need he remind the House of our former conduct in this respect? Had we not treated, had we not formed alliances with Portugal and with Spain, at the very time when these kingdoms were disgraced and polluted by the most shocking and barbarous acts of superstition and cruelty, of racks, torture, and burning, under the abominable tyranny of the inquisition? Did we ever make these outrages against reason and humanity a pretext for war? Did we ever inquire how the princes with whom we had relative interests either obtained or exercised their power? Why then were the enormities of the French in their own country held up as a cause of war? Much of these enormities had been attributed to the attack of the combined powers ; but this he neither considered as an excuse, nor would argue as a palliation. If they dreaded or had felt an attack, to retaliate on their fellow citizens, however much

suspected, was a proceeding which justice disclaimed; and he had flattered himself, that when men were disclaiming old, and professing to adopt new principles, those of persecution and revenge would be the first that they would discard. No man felt greater horror at the proceedings of the combined powers than he did. A combination more dangerous to the tranquillity of Europe and the liberties of mankind had never been formed. It had been said, that Austria was not the aggressor in the war with France. Had those, who said so, seen the treaty of Pilnitz? Let them look at that treaty, take the golden rule of supposing themselves in the situation of the French, and judging of others as they would wish to be judged; and say whether or not the French had been the aggressors? But whatever might be thought of Austria, was the king of Prussia attacked by France? Were his territories menaced, or his allies insulted? Had he not been completely the aggressor, he would have called upon us as his allies, for succour; no such call had ever been heard of; a sufficient proof, if any proof were wanting, that he never considered himself but as engaging in an offensive war. What were the principles of these combined powers? They saw a new form of government establishing in France, and they agreed to invade the kingdom, to mould its government according to their own caprice, or to restore the despotism which the French had overthrown. Was it for the safety of English liberty, (liberty that still might be mentioned without offence) that if we should make any change in our form of government, or constitution, and that change should be disagreeable to foreign powers, they should be considered as having a right to combine, and replace what we had rejected, or give us any thing else in its room by fire and sword? He would not go over the atrocious manifestoes that preceded or followed the march of the combined armies; there was not a man in the House,

or at least but one (Mr. BURKE) who would attempt to defend them. But these it seemed were not to be executed—he hoped they were not; but the only security he knew of was, that those who issued them had not the means. What was their conduct? Their mode of raising money was at least as bad as that with which the French were reproached. The French confiscated property where they carried their arms; the duke of BRUNSWICK took what he wanted, and gave papers for it in the name of the unfortunate monarch whom he pretended to assist. He contracted debts in the name of the French king, which he knew the French king might never have the means or inclination to pay; and this swindling trick, for which any man in this country would have been convicted and punished, he continued after he had begun his retreat. Yet we stood by and saw all this without alarm, certainly without interference.—We perceived no danger in the success of despotism; but the moment the opposite cause became successful, our fears were extreme.

“ He should now shew, that all the topics to which he adverted, were introduced into the debate to blind the judgment, by rousing the passions, and were none of them the just grounds of war. These grounds were three; the danger of Holland; the decree of the French Convention of November 19th; and the general danger to Europe from the progress of the French arms. With respect to Holland, the conduct of ministers afforded a fresh proof of their disingenuousness. They could not state that the Dutch had called upon us to fulfil the terms of our alliance. They were obliged to confess, that no such requisition had been made; but added, that they knew the Dutch were very much disposed to make it. Whatever might be the words of the treaty, we were bound in honor, by virtue of that treaty, to protect the Dutch, if they called upon us to do so, but neither by honor nor the treaty till then. The conduct of the Dutch

was very unfortunate upon this occasion. In the order for a general fast by the States, it was expressly said, "that their neutrality seemed to put them in security amidst surrounding armies, and had hitherto effectively protected them from molestation."

"This he by no means construed as giving up the opening of the Scheldt on their part; but it pretty clearly shewed, that they were not disposed to make it the cause of a war, unless forced to do so by us. But France had broke faith with the Dutch. Was this a cause for us to go to war? How long was it since we considered a circumstance tending to diminish the good understanding between France and Holland, as a misfortune to this country? The plain state of the matter was, that we were bound to save Holland from war, or by war, if called upon; and that to force the Dutch into a war at so much peril to them, which they saw and dreaded, was not to fulfil, but to abuse the treaty. Hence he complained of the disingenuous conduct of ministers, in imputing that to the Dutch, which the Dutch wished to avoid.

"The decree of the 19th of November he considered as an insult; and the explanation of the executive council as no adequate satisfaction; but the explanation shewed, that the French were not disposed to insist upon that decree, and that they were inclined to peace; and then our ministers, with haughtiness unexampled, told them, they had insulted us, but refused to tell them the nature of the satisfaction that we required. It was said we must have security; and he was ready to admit that neither a disavowal by the executive council of France, nor a tacit repeal by the Convention, on the intimation of an acknowledged agent, of a decree which they might renew the day after they repealed it, would be a sufficient security. But at least we ought to tell them what we meant by security; for it was the extreme of arrogance to com-

plain of insult without deigning to explain what reparation we required ; and he feared an indefinite term was here employed, not for the purpose of obtaining, but of precluding satisfaction. Next it was said, they must withdraw their troops from the Netherlands before we could be satisfied. Were we then come to that pitch of insolence as to say to France, " You have conquered part of an enemy's territory who made war upon you ; we will not interfere to make peace ; but we require you to abandon the advantages you have gained, while he is preparing to attack you anew."—Was this the neutrality we meant to hold out to France? If you are invaded and beaten, we will be quiet spectators ; but if you hurt your enemy, if you enter his territory, we declare war against you. If the invasion of the Netherlands was what now alarmed us, and that it ought to alarm us, if the result was to make the country an appendage to France, there could be no doubt, we ought to have interposed to prevent it in the very first instance ; for it was the natural consequence which every man foresaw of a war between France and Austria. The French now said, they would evacuate the country at the conclusion of the war, and when its liberties were established. Was this sufficient? By no means ; but we ought to tell them what we would deem sufficient, instead of saying to them, as we were now saying, " This is an aggravation,—this is nothing,—and this is insufficient."—That war was unjust which told not an enemy the ground of provocation, and the measure of atonement ; it was as impolitic as unjust ; for without the object of contest, clearly and definitively stated, what opening could there be for the treatment of peace? Before going to war with France, surely the people, who must pay and must suffer, ought to be informed on what object they were to fix their hopes for its honorable termination. After five or six years' war, the French might agree to evacuate the Netherlands as

the price of peace ; was it clear that they would not do so now, if we would condescend to propose it in intelligible terms ? Surely in such an alternative the experiment was worth trying ; but then we had no security against the French principles. What security would they be able to give us after a war, which they could not give now ?

“ With respect to the general danger of Europe, the same arguments applied, and to the same extent. To the general situation and security of Europe, we had been so scandalously inattentive ; we had seen the entire conquest of Poland, and the invasion of France, with such marked indifference, that it would be difficult now to take it up with the grace of sincerity ; but even this would be better provided for, by proposing terms before going to war.

“ He had thus shewn that none of the professed causes were grounds for going to war. What then remained but the internal government of France, always disavowed but ever kept in mind, and constantly mentioned ? The destruction of that government was the avowed object of the combined powers, whom it was hoped we were to join ; and we could not join them heartily if our object were one thing while theirs was another ; for in that case, the party whose object was first obtained, might naturally be expected to make separate terms, and there could be no cordiality nor confidence. To this then we came at last, that we were ashamed to own engaging to aid the restoration of despotism, and collusively sought pretexts in the Scheldt and the Netherlands. Such would be the real cause of the war, if war we were to have—a war, which he trusted, he should soon see as generally execrated, as it was now thought to be popular. He knew, that for this wish, he should be represented as holding up the internal government of France as an object for imitation. No one thought less of the present state of government in France ; but he maintained as a principle

inviolable, that the government of every independent state was to be settled by those who were to live under it, and not by foreign force. The conduct of the French in the Netherlands was the same with such a war, as he was now deprecating, and might be an omen of its success. It was a war of pikes and bayonets against opinions; it was the tyranny of giving liberty by compulsion; it was an attempt to introduce a system among a people by force, which the more it was forced upon them, the more they abhorred. The French appeared less moderate, from pretending to be more so, than other nations; by overturning the ancient government, and imposing theories of their own on a people who dislike them, while they pretended to liberate instead of using their right of conquest. But was this such a crime in the eyes of Europe? As was said of the woman caught in adultery, which of the courts, would that of London or Berlin cast the first stone? The States of Brabant, they were told, had *pacta conventa*, a legal and free government of their own. But were the States free under the house of Austria, under JOSEPH, LEOPOLD, or FRANCIS? O yes! for when DUMOURIER was triumphantly entering Brussels, and the Austrian governors making their escape at a postern, they sent back a declaration to the States, restoring their *Magna Charta*, the *Foyeuse Entrée*, which had been the perpetual subject of dispute with their Sovereign, and which all their remonstrances could never obtain before. This was the government which acted with such honor to its subjects, and put the French to shame. He feared that if they were to examine the conduct of foreign powers, in point of honor and good faith, they must be compelled to speak less civilly of them than policy would dictate. Why, then, had he touched upon it? Because the conduct of France was perpetually introduced to inflame and delude, and it

was his duty to dispel the delusion, by shewing that it was not more exceptionable than that of its neighbours.

“ In all decisions on peace and war, it was important to consider what we might lose, and what we could gain. On the one hand, extension of territory was neither expected nor eligible. On the other, although he feared not the threat of the French marine minister, would any man say that our ally might not suffer?—that the events of war might not produce a change in the internal state of Holland, and in the situation of the Stadtholder, too afflicting for him to anticipate? In weighing the probable danger, every consideration ought to be put into the scale. Was the state of Ireland such as to make war desirable? That was a subject which had been said by some honorable gentlemen to be too delicate to be touched upon; but he approved not of that delicacy which taught men to shut their eyes against danger. The state of Ireland he was not afraid to mention. He thought it both promising and alarming; promising, because the government of this country had forced the government of that to an acknowledgment of the undoubted rights of a great majority of the people of Ireland, after having in a former session treated their humble petition with contempt, and in the summer endeavoured to stir up the Protestants against the Catholics; alarming, because the gross misconduct of administration had brought the government and the legislature into contempt in the eyes of the people. Here he called on his right honorable friend (Mr. WINDHAM) who had given the aid of his great talents, as secretary in Ireland, to an administration with which he had the honor of being connected, on the same principle on which he had declared, that he would support ministers when they had done mischief enough to be formidable,—when they brought the country into a situation sufficiently perilous, to accept of the same situation again, and avert the danger which they had created. He

hoped the plan to be pursued would be conciliatory ; that concession to the claims of the people would be deemed wisdom, and the time of danger the fit time for reform : in short, in every thing contrary to the declarations of the right honorable gentleman (Mr. PITT) here.

“ The people of this country loved their constitution. They had experienced its benefits—they were attached to it from habit. Why put their love to any unnecessary test ? That love by being tried could not be made greater, nor would the fresh burdens and taxes, which war must occasion, more endear it to their affection. If there were any danger from French principles, to go to war without necessity, was to fight for their propagation.

“ On these principles, as reprobated in the proposed address, he would freely give his opinion. It was not the principles that were bad and to be reprobated, but the abuse of them. From the abuse, not the principles, had flowed all the evils that had afflicted France. The use of the word Equality by the French was deemed highly objectionable. When taken as they meant it, nothing was more innocent ; for what did they say, “ all men are equal in respect of their rights.” To this he assented ; all men had equal rights, equal rights to unequal things ; one man to a shilling, another to a thousand pound ; one man to a cottage, another to a palace ; but the right in both was the same ; an equal right of enjoying, an equal right of inheriting or acquiring, and of possessing inheritance or acquisition. The effect of the proposed address was to condemn, not the abuse of those principles (and the French had much abused them) but the principles themselves. To this he could not assent ; for they were the principles on which all just and equitable government was founded. He had already differed sufficiently with a right honorable gentleman [Mr. BURKE] on this subject, not to wish to provoke any fresh difference ; but even against so great an authority he must say, that the

people are the sovereigns in every state ; that they have a right to change the form of their government, and a right to cashier their governors for misconduct, as the people of this country cashiered JAMES II. not by a parliament, or any regular form known to the constitution, but by a convention speaking the sense of the people : that Convention produced a parliament and a King. They elected WILLIAM to a vacant throne, not only setting aside JAMES, whom they had justly cashiered for his misconduct, but his innocent son. Again, they elected the house of BRUNSWICK, not individually, but by dynasty ; and that dynasty to continue while the terms and conditions on which it was elected are fulfilled, and no longer. He could not admit the right to do all this but by acknowledging the sovereignty of the people as paramount to all other laws. But it was said, that although we had once exercised this power, we had in the very act of exercising it, renounced it for ever. We had neither renounced it, nor if we had been so disposed, was such a renunciation in our power. We elected first an individual, then a dynasty, and lastly passed an act of parliament, in the reign of Queen ANNE, declaring it to be the right of the people of this realm to do so again without even assigning a reason. If there were any persons among us, who doubted the superior wisdom of our monarchical form of government, their error was owing to those who changed its strong and irrefragable foundation in the right and choice of the people, to a more flimsy ground of title. Those who proposed repelling opinions by force, the example of the French in the Netherlands, might teach the impotence of power to repel or to introduce. But how was a war to operate in keeping opinions supposed dangerous out of this country ? It was not surely meant to beat the French out of their own opinions ; and opinions were not like commodities, the importation of which from France, war would prevent. War, it was

to be lamented, was a passion inherent in the nature of man; and it was curious to observe, what at various periods had been the various pretences. In ancient times wars were made for conquest. To these succeeded wars for religion; and the opinions of LUTHER and CALVIN were attacked with all the fury of superstition and of power. The next pretext was commerce; and it would probably be allowed that no nations that made war for commerce ever found the object accomplished on concluding peace. Now we were to make war about opinions; what was this but recurring again to an exploded cause, for a war about principles in religion was as much a war about opinions, as a war about principles in politics. In the excellent set of papers alluded to by the right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT,] and which he had no doubt had been liberally distributed to the gentlemen who had lately got so many new lights on the French affairs, the atheistical speech of DUPONT in the Convention was quoted. Did they believe all the French to be atheists and unbelievers on account of that speech? If they did so believe, there would certainly be no reason to complain of them for want of faith. But admitting that the French were all atheists, were we going to war with them in order to propagate the Christian religion by means contrary to the precepts of CHRIST? The justifiable grounds of war were insult, injury, or danger. For the first, satisfaction; for the second, reparation; for the third, security was the object. Each of these, too, was the proper object of negotiation, which ought ever to precede war, except in case of an attack actually commenced. How had we negotiated? Not in any public or sufficient form; a mode which he suspected and lamented, by his proposing it, had been prevented. A noble lord [BEAUCHAMP] had said, that he thought it his duty not to conceal his opinions on so important an occasion, by absence or by silence; formerly the noble lord did not think ab-

sence so great a crime. During the nine unfortunate years that he had maintained the same political connections with him [Mr. Fox] the noble lord's attendance had not been very assiduous ; and he rejoiced to hear that the noble lord meant now to compensate for past omissions by future diligence. When the triple league was formed to check the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth, the contracting parties did not deal so rigorously by him, as we were now told it was essential to the peace of Europe that we should deal by the French. They never told Louis that he must renounce all his conquests in order to obtain peace. But then it was said to be our duty to hate the French for the part they took in the American war. He had heard of a duty to love ; but a duty to hate was new to him. That duty, however, ought to direct our hatred to the old government of France, not to the new, which had no hand in the provocation. Unfortunately the new French government was admitted to be the successor of the old in nothing but its faults and its offences. It was a successor to be hated and to war against ; but it was not a successor to be negotiated with. He feared, however, that war would be the result, and from war, apprehending greater evils than he durst name, he should have shrunk from his duty if he had not endeavoured to obtain an exposition of the distinct causes : of all wars, he dreaded that the most which had no definite object, because of such a war it was impossible to see the end. Our war with America had a definite object, an unjust one indeed, but still definite ; and after wading through years on years of expense and blood, after exhausting invectives and terms of contempt on the vagrant congress, one ADAMS, one WASHINGTON, &c. &c. we were compelled at last to treat with this very congress, and those very men. The Americans, to the honor of their character, committed no such horrid acts as had disgraced the French ; but we were as liberal of

our obloquy to the former then as to the latter now. If we did but know for what we were to fight, we might look forward with confidence, and exert ourselves with unanimity ; but while kept thus in the dark, how many might there be who would believe that we were fighting the battles of despotism. To undeceive those who might fall into this unhappy delusion, it would be no derogation from the dignity of office to grant an explanation. If the right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT] would but yet consider—if he would but save the country from a war—above all, a war of opinion, however, inconsistent with his former declarations his measures might be, he would gladly consent to give him a generous indemnity for the whole, and even a vote of thanks. Let not the fatal opinion go abroad, that Kings had an interest different from that of their subjects ; that between those who had property and those who had none there was not a common cause and a common feeling.

“ He knew that he himself should now be represented the partizan of France, as he had formerly been represented the partizan of America. He was no stranger to the industry with which these and other calumnies were circulated against him, and therefore he was not surprised ; but he really was surprised to find that he could not walk the streets without hearing whispers that he and some of his friends had been engaged in improper correspondence with persons in France. If there were any foundation in such a charge, the source of the information could be mentioned ; if it were true, it was capable of proof. If any man believed this, he called upon him to state the reasons of his belief. If any man had proofs, he challenged him to produce them. But to what was this owing ? The people had been told by their representatives in parliament, that they were surrounded with dangers, and had been shewn none. They were, therefore, full of suspicion, and prompt of belief. All

this had a material tendency to impede freedom of discussion ; for men would speak with reserve, or not speak at all, under the terror of calumny. But he found by a letter in a newspaper, from Mr. LAW, that he lived in a town where a set of men associated, and calling themselves gentlemen, [Mr. REEVES's association, Crown and Anchor] not only received anonymous letters reflecting on individuals, but corresponded with the writers of such letters, and even sometimes transmitted their slanders to the Secretary of State. He could not be much surprised at any aspersion on his character, knowing this ; and therefore he hoped the House would give him the credit of being innocent till an open charge was made ; and that if any man heard improper correspondence imputed to him in private, he would believe that he heard a falsehood, which he who circulated it in secret durst not speak in public."

The Address was agreed to without a division.

At length the die was cast, and the various events of the war gave rise to frequent debates in parliament ; but the disappointments and reverses, which the allied armies experienced in the campaign of 1794, prompted the leaders of opposition in both Houses to bring forward in the following session a variety of motions urging the necessity of setting on foot a negociation for peace. The grandest effort of all these was made by Mr. Fox on the 24th of March 1795, when in conformity to due notice previously given, he moved, " that the House should resolve itself into a committee to inquire into the state of the nation."

" This solemn mode of inquiry ought not," the orator observed, " to be resorted to, but in cases of peculiar emergency ; and such he esteemed the present. Whatever differences of opinion might prevail concerning the general state of Europe, no man, he thought, would be hardy enough to deny that the dangers, which impended over this country, were many and great ; and, at such a

crisis, the commons would not do their duty to their constituents, if they afforded confidence to any administration, but on the strongest grounds, and the firmest conviction of its integrity and competence to the charge. He had introduced a similar motion in the year 1777, after the surrender at Saratoga; and though the majority then differed from him as to the cause of the misfortunes of the country, they did not think it consistent with the dignity or duty of the House, at so awful a moment, to decline going into an inquiry, by which all the strength of our means would be fairly compared with the justice and value of the object to be obtained, and a retrospect would be taken of the conduct of those who were intrusted with our affairs. But how trifling and insignificant were the perils of that moment compared with those which now threatened every part of the empire? Besides," said Mr. Fox, "a spirit of discontent is diffused through the country, not arising from the influence of French principles,—but the natural effect of a system of misfortune and disgrace. The number of dissatisfied minds is daily increasing; nor do they conceal the cause. They assert, that this House is not the representative of the people,—not even virtually the representative of the people,—neither taking upon itself the guardianship of their rights, nor shewing the smallest alacrity in the superintendence of their interests. If then such an opinion has gone forth, what better argument can the persons have who are desirous of gaining proselytes and of spreading the dissatisfaction which they feel, than to say that, even at such a moment as the present, the House of Commons not only can sit still, without bringing the executive government to account for the millions of money which have been squandered, and the oceans of blood which have been spilt, but can resist a motion for inquiring into the measures which have uniformly produced such calamity and disasters? This argument will be greatly strengthened by

the known fact, that the general wish of the people is for peace; and that even those who were originally the loudest and most vehement declaimers for the justice and necessity of the war, are now eager for opening a door to an immediate negociation. If the House then should pay no regard to the change of public opinion, but should maintain a blind and implicit confidence in ministers, and be ready, without any inquiry into their past conduct, to support them in the prosecution of the most ruinous hostilities, must it not give uncommon force to the assertion, that the House is in reality lost to all the functions for which it was designed? In what way, except by invidious distinctions and declarations against the present ministry, will the admirers of the British constitution be now able to defend it? How can they say that it is essentially good, when it suffers such a train of misfortunes, not merely without punishment, but without inquiry? What can be brought in excuse for the supineness of this House, or what possible answer can be given to the just charge of our relinquishing our duty, and of our resisting the general voice of the people? Can that constitution be essentially good, where less attention is paid to the people even than in arbitrary governments? I have always thought that the best defence of the constitution was not, that it tallied with the theories of speculative men; nor that in its letter there was more appearance of regard to the abstract ideas of liberty—but its best defence is its practical uses—its best character is, that it has produced substantial happiness to man. Take away this argument, and leave it to those who are dissatisfied with our government to call upon its defenders to look at its practice, and to say that our executive government has gone on for two years in a system which involved an expense of blood and treasure beyond comparison, in pursuit of an object which they have never explained,—by measures which have uniformly failed,—in which every one event has

been marked by disaster, or disgrace, or by both; and that at the end of this time, the House of Commons abets the government in the continuance of the same course; it will be in vain to contend that the beauty of the constitution can be illustrated by its practice. Must it not naturally occur, if this constitution be practically good, what constitution can be practically bad? What is the true character of a bad government? That the measures of a prince, though wicked and flagitious, may be persevered in for a time against the interests of his people. This, however, is not always true; for the most despotic princes have not always been able to keep their ministers against the indignation of the country. But if it be possible for the ministers of Great Britain to persevere in their measures, under such a series of disasters as we have suffered, not only without responsibility, but even without inquiry, then the most just accusation against despotic governments will be applicable to this; and thus the advocates for the British constitution will be deprived of their very best argument in its defence. Were I, therefore, to do nothing but state to this House that we have been now two years engaged in a war, in every part of which we have failed,—in which all our measures have been disastrous,—in which we have lost the object for which we at first pretended to undertake the war;—and in which our enemies have gained more than the wildest imaginations of those who drove us into it ever ascribed either to their ambition or their principles,—I think I should require no farther inducements to prevail on a House of Commons, eager to discharge its duty, to go into a committee on the state of the nation.”

But Mr. Fox did not content himself with this general argument: he took a particular view of each branch of the proposed inquiry, and endeavoured in a strain of the most commanding eloquence to fix the attention of his hearers on the true grounds of every national misfortune.

He held out as the grand objects of investigation, the resources of the country, and the probability of their being employed with effect. These again he subdivided into a variety of heads ; 1st, our population, money, trade, and manufactures ; 2dly, our connections with foreign states, the will and power of our allies to serve the common cause ; and 3dly, the principle of the war, and our conduct in it, to which all eyes would be naturally turned. If it should appear, as ministers asserted, that we had entered upon the war with spirit, and had conducted it with temper and prudence, the result would be absolute despair. Upon this view, an inquiry must be favorable to ministers. " Admit this position," said Mr. Fox, " and the confidence which has been given to them, will be justified. If they have acted with wisdom and vigor, it will be manifest that the cause of failure lay in the principle itself, not in them. But if they have not acted with wisdom and vigor, it will be seen that the principle was good, though the conduct was defective. In a measure which involves so deeply the dearest interests of mankind, it is surely of importance to ascertain this essential truth before we proceed any farther.

" With respect to the first branch of the inquiry, Mr. Fox declared his intention, if the House should go into a committee, to move for a complete and accurate account of our loss of men by the war. A paper had been laid on the table, said to be a return of the British loss, but which was obviously defective in many particulars ; for comparing it even with the occasional reports made in the London Gazette, a vehicle for which he had not the highest reverence, considerable differences would be detected. He pointed out many instances of this sort, adding that a correct statement of all the varieties of shape and form, in which death had been presented to our unfortunate countrymen, would convince the House, that we had already suffered such a diminution as the state of

the population of Great Britain could not recruit. This was not all—it was not merely the loss of British troops ; it was not the horrible consideration of the slaughter of our fellow-subjects only ;—but the mortality of our allies also, that the committee would have to ascertain. Was it true, he asked, as had been asserted in the only documents which we received of the proceedings in France, that more than sixty thousand men had surrendered as prisoners of war in the last campaign? If this was true, it surely ought to instigate that House to an inquiry, before they proceeded farther in a war so calamitous. What must the amount of the mortality be, if sixty thousand men were made prisoners? Ought not the state of British population to be ascertained as clearly as possible, before the House consented to new drains of blood?

“ The next argument respecting our resources was, that in the course of the present war we had already funded sixty millions, besides an unfunded debt of near ten millions more. We had raised taxes little short of three millions a perpetual burthen on the people. What was the extent of the burthens to be imposed next year? Before we rashly plunged into new expenses, we should be satisfied of the ability of the people to bear the load, and we should compare it with the benefits we hoped to secure to them by these exertions.

“ It was said that our resources were supported by the manufactures and trade of the country, and that these were in a flourishing condition. But he would ask gentlemen best acquainted with the manufacturing districts of the kingdom, if they had not already been considerably injured by the war? He had seen papers, which had carried the diminution of trade and the decrease of population in Lancashire to an astonishing extent. It was the duty of the house to inquire whether these statements were well founded or not. One fact was indisputable ; that the export of British manufactures decreased in 1793

to the amount of four millions. In 1794, it got up again about two millions; but this was to be ascribed solely to the spirit of adventure or of sanguine speculation respecting conquered islands in the West Indies, and which neither could or would be continued. Our maritime trade was in reality unable to bear the enormous weight of insurance. At no period of the last war, when we had to contend with France, Spain, Holland, and America, was insurance higher than at this moment.

“ Our next point of resource was our foreign allies. He wished to know who they were? Was the King of Prussia our ally? Did he fulfil the treaty for which the subsidy was paid him? If he did fulfil it, why did we cease to pay that subsidy? Why had we broken the contract? Surely parliament ought to inquire into, and ascertain this point? Let the House do their duty, and render justice to that monarch: let them declare that ministers have acted towards him with treachery: or let them express their indignation at the scandalous breach of contract which he has committed; and let them shew to the nations in Europe, that, faithful to their own engagements, they will not submit to be the dupes of any potentate on earth. Our connection with Prussia was to be viewed in another light also. If he was no longer our ally, what had become of the treaty in 1788? By that treaty, he was obliged to furnish 30,000 men. It had been made the ground for justifying the treaty of 1793, that his former engagement extending only to a supply of 30,000 men, it was good policy to give him a subsidy of twelve hundred thousand pounds for furnishing double the number. What followed? He left the allies in the middle of the campaign; and by a second bargain for an increase of his services, we lost them totally. Was a British House of Commons to lavish enormous sums of money only to purchase the breach of treaties,—to procure the violation of engagements, leading, in their con-

sequences, to the destruction of all the measures in which we were engaged? They had read such various accounts of his present proceedings, as made it still more necessary to inquire into the fact. They had heard of his sending armies again to the Rhine; and they had heard that he considered the Rhine as a proper boundary for France. It was said by some that his armies were marching against the French, and by others that he was marching against the allies. They ought to know precisely what he was, whether he was an ally, whether he was neutral, or whether he was an enemy. An honorable gentleman [Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY] had said, 'that, the King of Prussia during the last campaign, did us better service, than by direct co-operation with the allied armies.' Perhaps his Prussian Majesty might explain and prove the assertion thus: he might say, that the war having been undertaken for the demolition of Jacobin principles, which set themselves up against regular governments like his, he had rendered more service to the allies by his attack upon Poland, than he could by any other means: he might say, what signified the capture of a town, the recovery of a fortress, or the protection of a province, compared with the great achievements which he had performed in Poland? Had he not crushed the rise of Jacobin principles among that abominable people? He had reduced them to that condition of slavery which was consistent with, and safe for, the *regular governments*! What signified the recovery of Flanders, or the preservation of Holland, when opposed to the capture of KOSCIUSKO? To the overthrow of that distinguished man, whose courage and talents had excited the sympathy of every congenial breast, and whose example warmed every generous soul to the great and sacred duty of the melioration of the condition of his kind! The King of Prussia might say, that he had thus done more for the *real* cause, rendered more service to the *real* ob-

ject of the confederacy, than by any co-operation with their troops! If so, it was manifest we had given one million two hundred thousand pounds to subdue Poland. Unless we had granted him the subsidy, he could have nothing, by his own confession. If we had not given him the sum, he would have done for us just as much as he had done—that was *nothing*! If he was to be considered as our ally, he must again be subsidized. We must either, therefore, look upon him as an ally gone off, or as an ally to be hired, unless, indeed, we were even to be obliged to purchase his neutrality.—With respect to the Emperor, we were to give him four or six millions, which ever he pleased to accept; and if he should imitate the example set him of withdrawing in the middle of the campaign, *we* could not withdraw also, as we were to advance the whole sum at once, and thus to deprive ourselves of all power of check on his conduct. But the most material consideration was, that if he could not take the field this year without so enormous a loan, he would be equally incapable of taking it next year without another loan; and thus Great Britain was to sustain the whole burthen of the war. Though large subsidies were paid to the Italian Princes, we scarcely heard of a movement in that country; and as to Sardinia, would not its neutrality have been as serviceable to us as the diversion it had made? Spain had lost Navarre, Biscay, and Catalonia; and her finances were in such a state, that she must either apply for a subsidy, or make a separate peace with the enemy. All this undoubtedly called for inquiry, that we might ascertain what precise dependence we ought to have on the exertions of our allies.

“It was also of importance to inquire whether we stood high in the estimation of neutral states, for our rectitude, dignity, moderation, and justice. These ought to be ranked among the number of our resources; and no man would deny the eternal truth of the principle,

that, if we had been deficient in justice, we had been deficient in wisdom, and had thereby enfeebled our aim, and taken from the vital strength of the country. With respect to America, after taking her ships, we had agreed to pay for the damage she had sustained. To the court of Denmark we had sent memorial after memorial complaining of her neutrality; the answers to which had raised the character of M. BERNSTOFF higher than that of any Danish minister before him. We had engaged in a diplomatic contest, in which we shewed ourselves completely ignorant of the laws of nations, and were foiled accordingly. After having by menace and insult compelled the Duke of Tuscany to declare war, contrary to his own inclination, the advice of his ministers, and the interests of his subjects, we were at last obliged to submit not only to his neutrality, but to his concluding a treaty of peace and amity with the French Convention. We had insolently told the independent cantons of Switzerland, that, although, they might choose to call themselves neutral, they were not to allow their subjects to reap the advantages of that neutrality by any intercourse with the people of France. The Swiss returned a dignified answer, '*that they would preserve a neutrality which His Britannic Majesty had often commended, and even acknowledged as an obligation.*' Our conduct and language to the little Republic of Genoa had been still more unbecoming; but, after blockading the port, we were content to withdraw our ships, with an ungracious apology for the insult we had offered. Thus had ministers impaired the character of the nation, and brought upon it, what it had never known before, the imputation of injustice and pusillanimity."

Their disingenuity, in having never avowed the specific object of the war, he deemed equally impolitic and mean spirited. "If," said Mr. Fox, "they had thought or acted like statesmen, they would have told the world,

we care not what the government of France may be, we are fighting to repel an unprovoked aggression, and to protect our allies the Dutch; or they would have adopted the idea of a late distinguished member of this House, who by an odd figure, said, the object of the war was not the defence of the Dutch, but the restoration of monarchy in France,—the restoration of the emigrants to their property, and the re-establishment of ancient institutions; because, unless all this was done, his Majesty was not safe upon his throne—no gentleman could be assured of his estate—nor any religious or civil establishment be free from danger.* Either side of the alternative would have had its inconveniences. If we had taken the former, and said that *we sought only indemnity for ourselves, and security for our allies, without regarding what might be the form of government in France,* we should have had no pretence for expecting aid from French emigrants, or from insurgents in any part of France, except as far as they may be supposed to facilitate our operations abroad, by embarrassing the ruling powers at home. We should have had no right to look for the co-operation of those powers whose object was the restoration of monarchy in France. But we should have had one advantage, more than sufficient to compensate all these disadvantages; we should have been at war with the French on known principles of war; the people of France could never have been persuaded, that their existence as an independent nation, and even their lives were attacked; and consequently they could never have been brought to make the same exertions. Does any man believe, that, for the navigation of the Scheldt, for a fortress on their frontier, or an island in the West Indies,

* The figurative expression here alluded to, which Mr. Fox through delicacy did not repeat, had been made use of in a former debate by Mr. BURKE, whose exact words were "A war about the Scheldt, a war about a chamber pot!"

they would have endured the system of terror,—that they would have suffered persons and property to be put in requisition,—and that they would have been converted into what has been emphatically called, and emphatically felt, an armed nation? Would the Convention have been able to persuade them, that they were fighting for their liberties and their lives, when they were clearly told by us, that the whole contest was about the navigation of the Scheldt, and the security of the United Provinces? If the aid of the French emigrants and insurgents in France was thought to be an advantage superior to this, we should have taken the other part, and said, “*We make war, not against France, but for France; we wish neither to dismember her territory, nor to weaken her power; but to restore to her the blessings of regular government, and to good citizens the enjoyments of their rights and property.*” The inconvenience here would have been, that we should have united against us every republican in France, with many of those who, although friends to a limited monarchy, dreaded the re-establishment of the ancient system. But we should have produced this good effect, that all the emigrants, all the Frenchmen attached to the old system, and all who disliked the system of terror more than they disliked monarchy, would have exerted themselves in our favor. Through a childish hope of gaining the advantages of both plans, ministers have gained the advantages of neither. How could it be otherwise? When Condé and Valenciennes surrendered, they were taken possession of in the name of the emperor. The garrison of Mentz was sent to fight against the royalists of La Vendée. When we took the French islands in the West Indies, did we take possession of them for Louis the XVII? We took possession of them for ourselves, to be retained as conquests, if the chance of war should leave them in our hands. When such was our conduct, could it be imagined that any French emigrant,

whose situation was not desperate, would join us? or that all who loved their country more than they loved royalty, would not be against us? In all cases to attend to justice is particularly important; and the love of country is a motive so powerful as to be used as a pretext even by those who feel it not. The royalists held out long and bravely; but what could they say to the people of France—what could they put in their manifestoes of equal weight with the addresses from the Convention? They might say, *If we conquer, the French monarchy will be restored, but curtailed and dismembered; and the first steps towards peace will be the surrender of one third of its former territory.* The Convention could say, *If we conquer, France will remain entire, a great and independent nation, triumphant over all the powers which have leagued against her liberties.* With such discouragements on the one hand, and such flattering prospects on the other, was it to be expected that any considerable number of Frenchmen would connect their own cause with that of the allies? We have so shuffled and trimmed in our professions, that no party will flock to our standard. It will be said, that we could not be certain, in the first instance, how far it would be expedient to interfere in the internal affairs of France; that we must watch events, and act accordingly. By this indecision—by this want of clearness with respect to our ultimate intentions, we have lost more than any contingency could ever promise. Toulon was taken possession of by Lord Hood, on condition, as those who surrendered it understood, of restoring the constitution of 1789. Whether ministers intended to observe that condition, I know not; but in their subsequent publications they gave reason to hope that they did. They offered peace and protection to all well-disposed Frenchmen, who should join in restoring monarchy, without specifying what kind of monarchy; and what protection have they given to those who en-

deavoured to restore it? Have not the royalists, for want of assistance or encouragement, been obliged, however reluctantly, to submit to the laws of the republic? If the allies were fighting either *for* France or *against* France, what should have been their conduct towards FAYETTE and DUMOURIER? The treatment of FAYETTE by the Austrians will damn their name to eternal infamy. They found him, and the companions of his misfortunes, not at the head of an army, nor in arms, and took them, against all the laws of nations and of war, not as prisoners of war, but as prisoners to be consigned to a dungeon. If the allies were fighting *against* France, surely they ought not to treat as criminals generals quitting the enemy. DUMOURIER came over when he thought he had some power with his army, less indeed than he supposed, although it was impossible that a man, who had served his country with such ability and success, should not have had a considerable party in it. How was he treated? After extolling his virtue, at a moment when he had rendered his virtue doubtful, when it was found that he could not bring his army with him, the allies acted as if they had passed a decree, forbidding any French general to come over to them in future. It has been said, that no religious sect is so bigotted as to exclude converts; but the political bigotry of the allies is more austere than religious bigotry. If they were fighting *for* France, against the Convention, they ought to have praised DUMOURIER as a convert, and held him up as an example for the conversion of others. If they were fighting *against* France, they should have considered all Frenchmen as enemies, in the common acceptation of the term; and not by denouncing vengeance for crimes committed in France, as lord AUCKLAND had done, in a paper published at the Hague, given ground for that enthusiasm of resistance, which arose in the minds of men who conceived their lives, as well as liberties, to be in danger—an enthusiasm,

which has united men for common defence, who, in every moment of respite, were tearing one another to pieces, and sending their opponents to the scaffold when they had the power. If the allies were fighting *for* France, for the restoration of monarchy and regular government, I do not mean to say that those who were immediately the cause of the murder of the king should be overlooked; but the allies ought not to have begun with thundering forth a manifesto, threatening destruction to Paris and all its inhabitants—a manifesto, which one cannot now bear even to read, but by contrasting the insensate fury of the menace with the impotence of the attempt to put it in execution. If we were fighting *for* France, we ought to have published to the people of France, that we had no views of aggrandizement, much less of dismembering the kingdom, or taking vengeance of the inhabitants. It was well said by the excellent man whom I have already alluded to, [MR. BURKE] *that he knew not how to draw up an indictment against a whole nation.* Some exceptions might have been necessary; but these should have been mentioned by name, that other persons might have nothing to fear. By this mode of proceeding, I own that many persons, deserving of punishment, might have escaped; but this would not have been so bad as the terrifying all France by indiscriminate threats. This I conceive to be a fundamental error. The House ought to inquire whether it is so, or not; and if it is, to take a new and intelligible line of proceeding, either *for* France as a nation, or *against* it. To be convinced of the propriety of doing this, it is only necessary for every man, who hears me, to ask himself, whether it is possible, that, if the French Convention were to refuse any thing like reasonable terms of peace, they could call forth such extraordinary exertions on the part of the people, as the idea, that there is no alternative but victory or subjugation, has enabled them to do?

“ After dwelling so long on the great errors,” continued Mr. Fox, “ it is almost sufficient to name the less. If we took possession of Toulon, with a view not of conquest, but of supporting the royalists in France, it was the most important advantage to which our attention could have been directed. Yet we left it with a small garrison of British troops, trusting to the aid of allies, who were either unable or unwilling to defend it. This was said to be done for the sake of an expedition against the French West India islands : and that expedition was again crippled by collecting troops under the command of the Earl of Moira, for a descent upon the coast of France—a descent, for which an opportunity has never yet been found. The consequence was, that Toulon was lost, and that a number of troops was sent to the West Indies, sufficient to *take* the islands, but not to *keep* them. Guadeloupe is already gone ! There is little hope of retaining any part of St. Domingo ; and even Martinico and St. Lucia cannot be considered as in a state of security. The error of the last campaign has been confidence in the king of Prussia, in the Belgians, and the Dutch. We told the people of the Austrian Netherlands, that they were fighting for their religion ; and the people of the United Provinces, that they were fighting for their liberties ; but neither of them believed us. We drew the Dutch into a war, which they had no inclination to undertake, even in defence of the Scheldt. When their protection was alleged as the principal cause for going to war, I asked, whether they had demanded our assistance ? To this it was answered, that they durst not demand it ; but if it was offered to them, they would not refuse it. I then believed and stated the case to be the reverse ; that if our assistance, which they did not wish for, was offered, they durst not refuse it. All that has happened since confirms my opinion. While we were fighting in the Austrian Netherlands, the Dutch gave us

but a feeble aid. When we were driven out of the Austrian Netherlands, and the United Provinces were to be defended, the Dutch joined in welcoming the French ;— a clear proof that they were forced into what we called a defensive war. We ought to have known before hand, that the people of the United Provinces did not wish to be defended by us, and therefore were not to be depended upon as allies. We ought to have taken one of two lines of conduct ; to have either withdrawn our mischievous and oppressive protection, and said, *defend yourselves* ; or to have taken possession of the country with an army, and defended it like a conquered province.”

Mr. Fox next took a view of the naval part of the campaign ; and contended that the captures by the enemy were greater than in any former war, and that our trade was not greater in the same proportion. “ By documents,” said he, “ which I conceive to be tolerably correct, it appears that in the second year after France took part in the American war, the number of captures was 499. Of these, perhaps, one half were taken by the Americans. In the second year of this war, when we have France alone to contend with, the number of captures is 860. Until I hear this extraordinary difference, under circumstances so much less unfavourable, accounted for, I must either suppose a defect in the force and number of our navy, or mismanagement in the direction of it. His Majesty’s speech from the throne in 1794, held out many topics of past success as arguments for future hope. *We had driven the French out of Holland :— we had recovered the Austrian Netherlands :—we had taken several strong fortresses on the frontiers of France, which would facilitate our farther progress : and, while we had annoyed the enemy’s contracted trade, our own had been effectually protected. Yet, in the course of that very year, 860 of our ships were taken ! Every article of consolation held out in that speech is gone. We*

have lost the fortresses on the French frontier ;—we have lost the Austrian Netherlands ;—we have lost Holland ;—our trade has suffered more than in any former war within the same period ; and the re-captures bear no greater proportion to the ships taken than in former times. Are, or are not these grounds of inquiry for the House of Commons ? In what light do gentlemen consider themselves ? Have they been sent here only to vote taxes, as has been too often the case with the parliaments of former kings, or to act as a national council, and to see that the executive government is not only incorrupt, but judicious ? It might have been supposed, that, after the memorable first of June, we should be masters of the sea ; but of this we have no reason to boast. Our fleet came into port in November ; and the French fleet put to sea, no doubt, because they knew that ours was returned. So little foresight had been shewn in preparing our fleet for sea again, that it could not go out till late in January ; and for two months the French were thus masters of the sea. It will be said, that our fleet cannot be always out. To this I must answer, that, under proper management, a great part of it always may. But will any man contend that it could not have been ready for sea in less than two months, during great part of which time it was known that the French fleet was out ? It was even reported, that, after the ships were ready, they were detained for want of biscuit, which it became necessary to send to them by land carriage. How true these reports may be, I know not ; but all the circumstances are such as to demand inquiry, unless gentlemen are prepared to say, either that ministers have steered us so steadily, and piloted us so surely, as to deserve implicit confidence ; or that we are in a situation so prosperous, as to be of itself a sufficient proof of their good conduct. Is our present situation such, I will ask the minister himself, as to afford any rational ground for confidence ?

I am not, I hope, a man to give to success more credit than is due to it: I can reverence unsuccessful wisdom: my own life has not been such as leads me to think that success should be considered as the criterion of skill. Let the minister say, that *the hand of God was upon us when human prudence could avail us nothing*; but let him not say, that *Great Britain has been declining in every quarter,—that all her exertions, and the most lavish profusion of treasure and of blood, have availed her nothing*; and yet deny the propriety of an inquiry by the House of Commons, to discover, if possible, the source of so melancholy a reverse of fortune. In such a case, it is the duty of every member of this House, of the friends of ministers themselves, to give up their private confidence, and to promote inquiry. Then, if they find that ministers have been pursuing an impracticable object, or endeavouring to obtain it by inadequate means, they well know how to apply the remedy. If they find that ministers have been conducting the affairs of the state with ability and wisdom, they will be able to say, with satisfaction to themselves and their constituents, “*We will continue our confidence in these ministers.*”

What little claim they had to such confidence was farther illustrated by Mr. Fox, in a single glance at the situation of Ireland. “*Fatigued,*” said he, “as I feel myself, and long as I have trespassed on the patience of the House, I purposely omit many incidental points, trusting to the force of the general argument. There is, however, one so closely connected with the prosecution of the war, that I cannot pass it over. I mean the irritated state of the sister kingdom. When the war first became the subject of discussion, I know I was blamed by many of my friends, both in this House and out of it, for repeatedly, though ineffectually pressing upon the House a variety of considerations:—I harrassed the House with questions, which they were unwilling to de-

bate ; not, as was said by an author [CARDANUS] now very little read, *Nunquam libentius loquor, quam cum quod loquor auditoribus displicet.*—I felt no pleasure in addressing myself to unwilling hearers : but I persevered, because I felt it my duty to do so ; and I stated many circumstances that ought to discourage from going to war ; among others, that the Austrian Netherlands could not be retained while the Emperor's government was hated ; that Holland could not be defended while the Dutch did not wish to defend it ; and that the king of Prussia, by his conduct in his very first campaign against France, had proved that he was not to be depended upon. I was then told, that my speech was a libel upon all our actual and all our possible allies. If it was a libel, experience has proved that it had in it what has been held the strongest ingredient of libel, TRUTH ; and I hope that that speech will go down to posterity as a *convicted libel*. On the same occasion I adverted to Ireland, and was told, *touch not upon Ireland*. I answered then, as I should do now, that I must touch upon every thing that demanded the attention of the House, in a discussion so important as peace or war. Ireland is an important part of His Majesty's dominions, in regard to the supplies of men it affords for the army and navy in time of war. It is important in another point of view ; from the identity of constitution, and its being under the same executive government. We may look to it for information with regard to the disposition of ministers, and for examples to imitate or shun. Formerly I saw great difficulty in giving to the catholics of Ireland all that they had a right to claim as subjects of the same constitution, namely, equality of civil rights with every other subject. A strange jargon of protestant ascendancy had been set up, as if upon that depended the constitution of Ireland. Ministers some since got over the difficulty in part ; and although not in a way calculated to obtain much respect, unit-

ed the affections of the catholics for the time. When the new cabinet coalition took place in July, (a coalition which I sincerely lament) I hoped that this good at least would arise from it, that the corrupt administration of Ireland would be reformed, that effectual remedies would be applied to inveterate abuses, and that as much would be gained to liberty there, as seemed to be lost to it here. It was upon the point of being gained, when, unhappily, things took a different turn. I defy the most stubborn advocate to deny, that the present irritated state of Ireland is owing solely to ministers—no matter whether here or there—no matter whether to the right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT] the duke of PORTLAND, or Earl FITZWILLIAM; though I myself have no doubt as to which of them it is owing. A lord lieutenant was sent over, popular from his personal character, and more so, as connected with a part of the ministry here supposed to be favorable to the wishes and claims of Ireland. He arrived: he received into his confidence men to whom the people had long looked: he opened his plan: he was idolized, and to such a degree as to make the people join with him in the cry of war. He called upon them for support, and promised the emancipation of the catholics.” [Mr. PITT intimated across the table that it was *not so*.] Mr. Fox proceed thus—“ He DID promise the complete emancipation of the Catholics in Ireland: in whatever manner it was understood, or misunderstood in the British cabinet, such was the fact in Ireland. The people saw his measures: they saw the men whom he selected to conduct them; and although he dismissed not quite so many as they could have wished of those whom they had long regarded with detestation, they were satisfied. He called for supplies, in confidence of the promised reform of abuses: as it was the character of the nation to be more generous than prudent, large supplies were granted before hand. Having given all, the cup was dashed from

their lips ; their eager and excited hopes were blasted ; and even the favorite friend of ministers was recalled, whose character was worth that of the whole cabinet—whose character had given popularity to the whole ministry, because it obtained it the credit of being pure ; and whom to gain they had thought a greater prize than all their new allies. I shall probably be told that earl FITZWILLIAM went beyond his instructions, and suffered measures to be brought forward for which he had no authority. To this I answer, that I do not believe it. But of what moment is it whether ministers here or Earl FITZWILLIAM were to blame ? The danger from the irritation of Ireland is the same ; and if the House should now refuse to inquire into the circumstances, they make themselves responsible for the dismemberment of that kingdom. I entertain a great partiality for earl FITZWILLIAM. Whenever the matter shall be investigated, I am persuaded that the noble earl's conduct in the business will be found to have been such as that of all his life had been. But this, though a source of much private satisfaction, is no reason why the House should not go into the inquiry. The Catholics are three-fourths of the population of Ireland ;—but the Catholics are no longer a party. The only parties in Ireland are the possessors of a few places against the Irish nation. As far as I have heard, the Protestants and the Catholics are entirely united. Since the year 1793, they have had only one common interest against the abuses the corruption of government. I do not apprehend any separation of Catholics from Protestants : what I apprehend is the alienation of the whole Irish nation from the English government. Many people may think, that, because the constitution of Ireland consists of King, Lords, and Commons, each of these three branches is exactly like the branch of the same name in this country ; but they differ in many important respects. Many people may think, that since the year

1793, the Catholics have suffered no persecutions or exclusions; those who think so are much misinformed. But, putting all this aside, does not what has lately passed afford strong ground for discontent, and call upon this House to inquire, and, even, if necessary, to punish. If ministers here are to blame, let them be punished; or, if Earl FITZWILLIAM in Ireland has been madly running after popularity, by offering what he had not powers to grant, let him be punished. But if, on the other hand, it shall appear, that the noble Earl has been trifled with, and shuffled out of his measures and his situation, what punishment is due to those who have been the authors or instruments of this double dealing? Let the House therefore inquire; for, upon the existence of danger there can be no difference of opinion, whatever difference there may be with respect to its magnitude."

"Mr. Fox now anticipated the answer usually made to such motions as his, namely, that the ultimate object of inquiry being the removal of ministers, *why not at once move for their removal?* His reason for not doing so was, because in such a state as that to which they had brought the nation, inquiry into their conduct ought to precede a motion for their removal: although he would not affect to disguise, that, if the inquiry were gone into, a motion for their removal must follow. He then made a few remarks on the folly, weakness, and indecision of ministry. They had never declared whether they were making war *for* France or *upon* France. Just so had been their conduct towards Ireland. They had never spoken distinctly to either. They were cases in which one would imagine a minister must think it for his interest to be clearly understood; but men never get the better of their nature. It was not from any want of words, or choice of expression that the right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT] could not speak intelligibly: he was misunderstood by the House, and by his own particular friends: he employed

the gift of words, not like other men, for the sake of being more distinct, but for the purpose of being misunderstood: even his new associates in the cabinet did not understand him: of him it might be said, as of a great man of ancient times, *in rebus politicis, nihil simplex, nihil apertum, nihil sincerum*. Mr. Fox turning from these strictures to the main object of his speech, brought the whole to the following very plain, but forcible and impressive close: "Should the House agree to go into the inquiry, they will prove that they really are affected by the interest of their constituents; if they resolve to go on, without knowing who are our allies, or whether we have any, there will be too much reason for saying, that our constitution is gone. In either case I shall derive from having made the motion, the satisfaction of shewing, that there are men in the House who believe the situation of the country to be such as it really is, and who would do every thing in their power to avert the consequences but too much to be apprehended.—He concluded with stating his motion in the usual manner."

Mr. PITT rose the instant Mr. Fox sat down.

He said, "he would not follow the right honorable gentleman at length, through all the various points which he had selected for discussion, in a very long and certainly one of the most eloquent speeches ever delivered in that House. He would not argue them then, because, with one single exception, they had been repeatedly investigated and decided upon in that House in the course of the present and last session. He would not argue them then, because he was convinced that all the topics had been brought forward upon this occasion for the sole purpose of introducing the great and real object, which the right honorable gentleman had in view, viz. the present situation of the kingdom of Ireland, which he had rested on as a separate and substantive ground of inquiry. Leaving, therefore, for the present, all the various other

points of the right honorable gentleman's speech, which had certainly been discussed with great ability, and which he should allude to cursorily by-and-by, he would confine himself to that part of it which related to Ireland; and he hoped to convince the House, and he would begin with stating, that in his judgment, that very statement which was urged as a ground for going into a committee, was, upon every principle of policy, the strongest reason to induce the House to negative the motion. It was with much reluctance that he felt himself bound to say any thing upon the subject. Independent of the delicacy which he must feel in discussing in the English House of Commons points so intimately connected with the internal state of Ireland, and consequently more properly cognizable in the parliament of that kingdom, which had an independent legislature of its own, it could not but be obvious to every gentleman, that he must feel extremely cautious in making declarations upon this subject. He did not mean to deny, that there was much reason to regret some occurrences which had happened in Ireland; but he would boldly, positively, and unequivocally assert, that if this affair should be fully investigated, it would appear to the House and to the kingdom, that none of the embarrassments which might happen in that country, could in any degree be attributed to His Majesty's servants here. He would not then enter into the question, whether any blame attached to the respectable person at the head of the government. He had only thought it necessary to make an assertion in justice to himself and his colleagues, which he would defy at any future period to be disproved. More than this he would not say at present, except to observe, that if it was true that the sister kingdom was in a state of irritation, ferment, and uneasiness, it certainly was the strongest reason possible why that moment should not be chosen for the proposed inquiry. The great question was, what advantage would

arise from the investigation proposed by the right honorable gentleman? He begged leave to ask the right honorable gentleman, what good to either kingdom could possibly arise from the discussion of the subject at the present moment? In what manner did he propose to conduct the inquiry, if the House should agree to its expediency?

“ The right honorable gentleman had told the House that he had a motion to submit to a committee of inquiry, if it should be granted, which would not require the production of any paper to support it, but he wished to consider, nay he would put it to the candor of the right honorable gentleman himself, whether such an inquiry as this could be made to any effect whatever, without the production of a variety of papers, letters, despatches, &c. which it would be impossible at this period to make public. If the right honorable gentleman felt, as every friend to this country must feel, a degree of uneasiness even at a momentary interruption of the harmony and good understanding, which ought, and he hoped always would subsist between the two countries, surely he could not think his present motion a likely way to remove the embarrassments which were supposed to exist, and to restore the harmony which was stated to have been interrupted.

“ The right honorable gentleman had used the state of Ireland as he did almost every other occurrence—he had converted it into an argument to induce the House to change the opinions they had repeatedly and solemnly given upon the subject of the war, and to prove the necessity of an immediate peace. Here again his own statement made against the object he had in view. For if it was true that those embarrassments and that irritation existed in Ireland, if the probable consequence of that state of affairs was as had been stated, that we should not receive that cordial co-operation from Ireland, was it

likely that these circumstances would have the effect of procuring us a better peace ; or would an advantageous peace be more likely to be obtained, from having their temporary differences rendered so public as they necessarily must be, if this inquiry was gone into ? Thus the arguments of the right honorable gentleman answered themselves ; but at the same time he by no means meant to admit that the danger in the sister kingdom was, in any degree, so great as had been represented.

“ With respect to the observations which had been made relative to the body of Roman Catholics in Ireland, he was sure that the House must feel that so great a legislative act, one so intimately connected with the interests of Ireland, and which formed so peculiarly a subject of the consideration of the Irish parliament, could not then with propriety be discussed in the English House of Commons. What was it but saying to them, that the bare circumstance of calling those claims in question, that the delay interposed in granting them to their utmost extent, that the hesitating to level all those distinctions which had so long been established, and the policy of not being in too great haste to heap upon them new privileges in addition to those which they had so lately acquired, were to them matters of serious and intolerable grievance ? What was it but to countenance discontent under pretext of lamenting it, and to produce danger by the very means which were recommended as useful for precaution ? What was it but proclaiming to the enemies the embarrassment and difficulties under which we laboured at home ?—a sort of conduct by no means calculated to diminish their hopes of success, or infuse into them new dispositions to peace. If the House, from the progress of the French arms in Brabant and Holland, and from the views which they discovered of enlarging their territories, in proportion to the extent of their conquests, had been only more deeply impressed

with the necessity of vigorous exertion and manly perseverance in the contest, would they be likely to adopt a motion, which in the result could only be productive of humiliation and disappointment? Would they proclaim to the enemy a danger with respect to themselves, which, if not proclaimed, might in fact have no existence? Considered in this point of view, he could not well imagine a conduct less consistent with sound policy, with the true interests of the empire, or the termination of that great struggle in which the country was engaged, than that which was proposed by the present motion. With respect to the principles, so far as they affected Ireland, the comforts of individuals, the peace of the community, and the question in favor of policy, how far an equal participation of rights ought at once to take place between those who had long been established, and those who had formerly been merely tolerated; all these were topics into which he should not enter at present, as in all probability a future opportunity would present itself for their discussion. Having dismissed that part of the right honorable gentleman's argument which appeared to him the most important, he should follow him very cursorily through the other general divisions of it.

“ Without meaning to say any thing personally uncivil to the right honorable gentleman, he could not for a moment suppose him serious in any of the arguments which composed the former part of his speech. He hardly knew how to suppose the right honorable gentleman could be in earnest, when he occupied upwards of three hours in delivering a speech masterly and eloquent beyond parallel, for the purpose of introducing a peroration which lasted not more than a quarter of an hour, applied to the particular circumstances of the time. His speech consisted of topics which had been urged over and over again by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, and as frequently answered, and which, as he had ob-

served before, would not then have been again brought forward, except for the purpose of ushering in the main object of his speech, viz. the affairs of Ireland."

Mr. PITT said, " he had no complaint to make of the general nature of the subjects selected by the right honorable gentleman as fit subjects for inquiry: they were such certainly as must always claim the attention of the House of Commons. They consisted first of the general resources of this country in point of men and money, as the only effectual means of war; a detailed examination into the state of the population of this country; a view of the situation of our manufactures and commerce; a consideration of our foreign connections, both as relating to our allies and to neutral nations; and an investigation into the object of the war, and the means adopted by the executive government for carrying it on. If the House was at this moment convinced of the necessity of going into an inquiry upon the state of the nation, most undoubtedly these would all form important points of consideration.

" He begged to ask the House, however, if there was any one subject, of whatever nature, that had any the most distant relation either to the external policy or the internal regulations of this country, which might not become matter of discussion in the committee proposed by the right honorable gentleman? And if so, could it be contended that this was the time for such an inquiry? At a period so arduous and important as the present, when the country was stated to be, in every point of view, in such imminent danger, could gentlemen think it expedient or wise to commence an investigation of so extensive and almost endless a nature, and more especially at so advanced a period of the session, when there was no probability of making any considerable progress in it? Although not only every topic of the right honorable gentleman's speech had been before debated, but

almost every one of his arguments had been before advanced and refuted, yet there was one unfortunate singularity in his mode of arguing on this occasion, which was, that he contended that it was necessary to refer all these points to the consideration of a committee, for the purpose of forming a correct judgment upon them; yet that gentleman, and the small minority who acted with him, had long ago taken upon themselves to decide positively upon every one of them. The great majority of that House had decided upon different principles; principles which they had deliberately adopted, upon which they were now acting, and into the grounds of which it could not therefore be supposed necessary that they should now inquire.

“ The discussions which had taken place upon these various subjects had, in his opinion, rendered the appointment of a committee as unnecessary, as, in another point of view, he had contended it to be improper. They were called upon to examine into the pecuniary resources of this country. The House had already this session much more satisfactory proof upon this head than any committee could give them. They had seen a supply voted for the service of the year, unexampled in point of amount. They had seen a loan of eighteen millions negotiated upon terms extremely advantageous to the public—a sum great and unprecedented, but necessary from the magnitude of the contest in which we were engaged, and the novelty of the efforts with which we had to contend. The bill granting that loan, and stating the terms upon which it was supplied, was a more satisfactory proof of the flourishing state of the credit of the country, and of the confidence of monied men, than could be derived from the result of any inquiry that could take place. It proved, in spite of all the exaggeration which had been employed to depreciate the resources of the country, that, so far from having suffered any diminution, they

had increased in a degree equal to the extraordinary scale of expenditure which had lately been incurred. They had seen taxes to an immense amount (1,600,000*l.* much increased in consequence of the provision made by the vigilant attention against unforeseen exigencies, and from the circumstances of a provision being also made for the reduction of the debt at the very moment when it was contracted) laid on the public,—taxes which there was every reason to suppose would be productive, and yet such as were on all sides allowed to press as little as possible upon the poor. Could the House, after this solid unanswerable proof of the resources of the country, be led by the speculative arguments of the right honorable gentleman to have recourse to a committee for the purpose of ascertaining the fact?

“The next point which had been discussed, was the state of the population of this kingdom. It had been contended, that it was in such a decreasing state as to render it impossible to recruit our armies. This was a point upon which he had never before heard a doubt entertained. He was sure that no information which could be given by government upon this subject had ever been refused. That in the course of a war, so novel in its nature, and so unexampled in its probable consequences as the present, we must lose a considerable number of men, was a melancholy truth which could not be denied. The loss even of one man from our troops, who had upon every occasion during this war maintained the honor of the country, and acquired immortal glory to themselves, was an event which must be deeply deplored; yet when the importance of the object was considered, and the immense stake we had upon the issue of this contest, it was necessary to look with a firm determination to the discharge of that imperious duty, which required such sacrifices, great as they were, for the good of the community. Any consideration therefore drawn from this

topic, though it might have the effect to agitate the feelings, could not be expected to decide the result of the opinions of the members of that House. It was always to be remembered, that defensive efforts in the prosecution of a just war, were better than tame acquiescence in the usurpations of a cruel and oppressive enemy. The question whether we had lost in the course of the war a few hundreds more, however it might affect their feelings, yet by no means decided the general question. Every object in life was great or small by comparison; the loss of any of our gallant countrymen, considered abstractedly must be felt as a calamity; but when considered with a relation to the nature of the present contest, that loss, great as it was, ceased to be felt in the immense magnitude of the object for which we were engaged. It was to be observed, however, that the right honorable gentleman had taken this subject only in one point of view, and that most unfavorable for this country. The losses sustained by England were enumerated with the most scrupulous exactness, and an argument had been drawn from thence to shew that we were unable, from want of men, to carry on the war. Did the honorable gentleman consider the other side of this picture? Had he stated the numbers lost by the enemy, which upon a moderate computation must be in the proportion of ten to one compared with ours; or had he from their losses inferred their inability to continue the contest? No—the argument had been pressed with vehemence, as proving the distress of this country, but would probably be said to be totally inapplicable to the enemy. With respect to the population of this country, it had once before formed a subject of debate, and the right honorable gentleman, upon that occasion, as well as upon the present, had argued upon false premises—he had formed his calculations upon the decrease of the population, from an examination of the returns of houses paying taxes; that was a fallacious mode

of judging ; as the accounts were in general inaccurately taken, and of course could not be relied on for an exact conclusion. He would suggest to the House, and to the honorable gentleman, a criterion which was by no means so liable to inaccuracy. When gentlemen saw the immense increase of manufactures, and of course the great increase of hands employed in them, and did not find that these hands were drawn from any other branch, the natural and rational conclusion was, that the population must be on the increase. The honorable gentleman said, that in some part of Lancashire, the decrease of marriages and births was very great ; in some places they had decreased one half, in others a third and a fourth, when by his own calculation he had estimated the decrease at only 12,000 persons ; but it should be recollected that the quarter, in which the calculation had been made, was in the neighbourhood of a manufacturing town, where the recruiting had been carried on with the greatest effect. The army of this country was greater now than ever it was at any former period : the navy had also been augmented to an amazing extent. This must necessarily tend in some places to lessen the population, but did not by any means prove that the decrease was general. And notwithstanding this great augmentation of the army and navy, so far from manufactures having decreased, the export had been greater last year than in any former year of war, and greater, with the exception only of two years, than any former year of peace. The right honorable gentleman had alluded to the declension of our trade in the year 1793. It was certainly true that our trade had been considerably less that year, owing to the great speculations of persons engaged in commerce, which in the year before had given a temporary stagnation to trade ; and yet so far from the country sinking under that check, or giving way to the pressure of a war, represented to be so fatal to our trade ; in the very next

year, viz. 1794, the commerce had arisen to an height never before known, except only in the years 1791 and 1792. Formerly it was customary to look to the years immediately preceding the American war as the most flourishing period of our commerce, and after the commencement of that war, it was supposed that many, many years of peace would be necessary to raise it again to the same pitch; and yet now in a time of war, and one stated to be so much more injurious to our trade than the American war, our commerce far exceeded that of the boasted years of 1770, 1771, &c. Were not all these facts, which the House were in possession of, more satisfactory than the report of any committee? If any inquiry upon this subject had been necessary, it would have been before the ways and means of the year were detailed, and proved to the House; but now it was wholly unnecessary.

“The next proposition of the right honorable gentleman was one of a most singular nature. It was calling upon the House to go into a committee of inquiry, to take into consideration all transactions whatever between Great Britain and her allies, and also between her and neutral nations. Without any regard to what might be the situation of this country with respect to those powers, whatever negotiations or treaties might be pending, the whole was to undergo the scrutiny of a committee of inquiry, and to be published to the world. The arguments used by the right honorable gentleman were upon this subject so strange and so unfounded, that it was unnecessary to reply minutely to them.

“With respect to the King of Prussia,” Mr. PITT said, “he had already stated his sentiments upon the conduct of that monarch. He had never contended that all the objects we had in view in that treaty were obtained, or that the King of Prussia had fully performed his engagements. He had admitted this when the subject

was before brought under discussion ; but he must repeat now what he had asserted then, that the failure on the part of the King of Prussia was no reason why this country was to depart from its general system, and was never, upon any occasion, again to enter into a treaty with other powers of a similar nature. But then the right honorable gentleman had urged the necessity of some declaration being made on the part of this country, expressive of our resentment at the non-performance of the treaty. It did not appear to him that such conduct on our part was called for by honor, or would be justified by reason. Angry declarations would only have the effect of creating animosities which might interrupt or prevent any future arrangements. The right honorable gentleman then alluded to the Emperor, and spoke in very strong terms of his inability, from the want of pecuniary resources, to carry on the war. Admitting the truth of that argument in its fullest extent, it did not go far enough to serve the right honorable gentleman's purpose. If that House still retained the opinions they had so often and so distinctly expressed upon the subject of the present war, the natural conclusion to be drawn from the argument of the emperor's pecuniary inability was, that Great Britain, possessed of resources of money, should by means of those resources enable the Emperor to bring his troops into the field.

“ In speaking of our allies, the right honorable gentleman had pressed much upon the repeated defeats and losses which they had sustained. It was unfortunately but too true, that the success had not corresponded with the expectations we had formed ; but it was a very unfair mode of reasoning to suppose that because the allies had not been positively successful, they were totally useless ; for though the effect of their assistance was not displayed in victories and conquests, yet, by engaging the attention of the enemy to various quarters, they had tended to di-

vide a force, which, if concentrated in a point, might have been infinitely more destructive. The next power to which the right honorable gentleman had turned his attention was the King of Sardinia; and he had contended that that monarch ought to have been left in a state of neutrality. In the first place, he begged to remind the House, and the right honorable gentleman, that the King of Sardinia was left without an option, whether he would remain neuter or not, as the French declared war against him. In regard to his being put in a state of neutrality at present, the only means of doing it was to carry on the war with vigor, or his neutrality would neither be safe to himself nor to the allies.

“The next point of the right honorable gentleman’s speech was his observations upon the declarations made by our ministers at foreign courts. Was it fair to quote particular expressions from their state papers, in order to charge them upon ministers? These papers were framed according to the exigencies of circumstances, and at the discretion of the envoy; ministers at home had no share either in composing or reviewing their contents; and if they should afterwards discover in them a careless or hasty expression, it was not to be supposed that they would very severely criticise, or very rigorously expose a fault which they might be apt to impute to excess of zeal for His Majesty’s service. He begged, therefore, once for all, to put in a protest against that mode which gentlemen on the other side of the House had so frequently used, namely, that of selecting a particular passage from some of these state papers, and then charging it upon the ministers at home, who would not of course anticipate every identical expression which a foreign minister might make use of. Upon examining these declarations fairly and altogether, they would be found to agree in sentiment with each other, and with the language of ministers at home.

“ As to the proposal for an inquiry into the conduct of the executive government of this country to neutral nations he was not aware of any good that could possibly arise from it at the present moment. Whatever might be the strong language in which gentlemen might have thought proper to indulge themselves with respect to the conduct of the British government towards foreign nations, it would be found, when the proper period should arrive for investigation, to have been strictly conformable to the best principles of the laws of nations, and to have been conspicuously marked by moderation and forbearance.

“ The right honorable gentleman had charged ministers with having in the first instance treated America with insult, and afterwards soothed her by submission. In answer to this, he could only say, that the principle which had governed His Majesty's ministers in their intercourse with other neutral powers, was the principle upon which they acted towards America. And when the treaty signed between that country and Great Britain was laid before the House (which should be done as soon as possible) gentlemen would then have an opportunity of judging whether there had been any dishonorable submissions on the part of the latter, and whether it had not been rather dictated on both sides by a spirit of fairness and mutual accommodation.

“ The right honorable gentleman had next come to the consideration of that often disputed point, namely, the object of the war. Upon this subject he would not have intruded one single word upon the House, had it not been that the right honorable gentleman had in some degree shifted his ground. He had stated that there were two lines of conduct which ministers might have adopted in the commencement of the war; each of these modes of conduct was in his (the right honorable gentleman's) opinion, attended with its respective advantages and disad-

vantages; but both of them were preferable to the line of conduct adopted by His Majesty's ministers. The first of these modes was by carrying on what he called a war *against* France, by confining the exertions of this country simply to protect our allies, and to revenge the insults offered to us, without in any manner whatever interfering in the internal commotions which might prevail in France. The other mode suggested was that of carrying on a war *for* France; thus openly to avow that our efforts were directed to the formation of a regular government in France, and that our conquests were only made in trust for LOUIS XVII. Either of these two systems might have been adopted, said the right honorable gentleman, with propriety, but our present system, differing from both, was radically wrong.

“The right honorable gentleman had that night abandoned all his old arguments; he formerly used to contend that we could not interfere in the internal affairs of France, without violating every principle of justice and of the law of nations. But the right honorable gentleman admits, that it would have been proper to have carried on the war expressly for the restoration of monarchy in France. He did not recollect that both the grounds which he had submitted to ministers as an alternative, were extreme cases, and that they, from the nature of the situation in which they stood, might think proper to adopt a middle policy, to which the whole of their conduct might be found perfectly reconcileable. With all possible respect for the right honorable gentleman's judgment, he thought that His Majesty's ministers had conducted the war in a manner, and upon principles more consonant to good sense and policy, than either of the systems stated by that gentleman. They had entered into a war for the defence of this country, and for the protection of our allies, in the prosecution of which they did not by any specific declarations, as to the internal si-

tuation of France, prevent themselves from taking every possible advantage of any favorable occurrences which might happen in France. Nor did they state, that the restoration of monarchy, or any particular form of government in France, was a *sine qua non*, without which they would not make peace. The madness of fighting to establish in France any particular form of government had been uniformly disclaimed by ministers. At the same time, this was no reason why they should relinquish assistance, of which they had a right to avail themselves in every former war. The first great object was to obtain for ourselves security, and it would have been so much the better if that object could have been more effectually accomplished by the establishment of a government in France, which seemed most likely to restore the country to tranquillity and happiness. It was necessary for the defence of our own possessions, that we should carry on an offensive war against the French in the West Indies.

“ This was the conduct of His Majesty’s ministers—this was the conduct which had frequently been explained to, and had as often received the approbation of the House of Commons; and he begged here, in the most distinct manner, to disavow that proposition laid down by the right honorable gentleman, that a nation, on entering into a war, was bound to state in clear and positive terms all its objects in the war, and by that means preclude itself from taking advantage of any fortuitous circumstances which might happen during its continuance.

“ With respect to what had fallen from the right honorable gentleman as to the want of vigilance and activity shewn by ministers in the conducting of the war, this point had been so often argued before, that he could say nothing new upon it. Upon one point only he would detain the House for a few moments, and that was in reply to the charge made by the right honorable gentleman, of

the want of attention in the admiralty to protect the trade of Great Britain. The charge was partly founded upon the increase in the price of insurance. It was true, that from some causes the price of insurance had increased ; but there were many circumstances to be taken into consideration upon this subject ; the great and unexampled extent of our commerce, which he had shewn in the former part of his speech ; the almost total annihilation of the commerce of France, which led her to turn her attention to the equipment of privateers to plunder our trade, which swarmed in every sea. Another very important circumstance was, that the enemy had hardly in any one instance contended for the empire of the sea ; a consequence of which was, that as their fleet was seldom united in a body, it was the better enabled in small divisions to harass our commerce. Added to all this, the enemy did not send any considerable naval force to the colonies, while we were obliged to send large squadrons ; but notwithstanding all these concurrent circumstances, our trade was not in any instance neglected. It was true, that for a short period the French were masters of the Channel, owing to the circumstance of Lord Howe's being obliged to put into port for the purpose of refitting ; but even during that short period, every possible precaution had been taken for the protection of our trade. The right honorable gentleman had entered into a comparison between the quantity of our tonnage in 1778, and the present period, and had stated the quantity of tonnage in 1778 much greater than he [Mr. PITT] had ever stated it at before ; but he must observe, that the register in 1778, contained the shipping belonging to the United States of America.

“ Upon the whole, the question for the consideration of the House was, whether or not they were to retract all the opinions which they had so often, and so solemnly pronounced, and whether they would employ concession

and submission as the most likely means to obtain an honorable, a secure, and a lasting peace?

“The right honorable gentleman had in the course of his speech sedulously endeavoured to confound every question of danger to be apprehended from the success of the French, and the idea of a regular government, with a government founded on principles inimical to freedom: and with the same anxiety endeavoured to palliate all the excesses of the French, by stating them to have originated in an enthusiasm in the cause of freedom. Entertaining such sentiments as these, and having been from the first adverse to the origin and conduct of the war, it was natural for that right honorable gentleman to forget all our advantages, while he remembered, and often exaggerated our misfortunes.—It was natural for him to lessen the value of our conquests, and to depreciate the splendor of our victories;—to represent our success as useless, but our defeat as fatal. Openly professing such sentiments, the House would not be surprised at such consequences.

“Those gentlemen who had studiously dwelt on every misfortune of the British arms, and on every circumstance of temporary difficulty, but had with equal care avoided to mention any instance of the success of our armies, or the prosperity of the country, might be disposed to approve of the motion, and of the removal of ministers from a situation which it was calculated to represent them as unqualified to hold. Other gentlemen, who looked to an honorable and lasting peace from a vigorous and effectual war, rather than from a dishonorable submission—those who did not impute a temporary interruption of success to want of judgment or to guilt—they would not, he was sure, withdraw their confidence from His Majesty’s ministers, without proof of their want of capacity. It would not be to make room for those who had disapproved of the war from its commencement, and who, instead

of meeting the crisis, would be disposed to shrink from it; but for persons better qualified to prosecute, with vigor and effect, a war founded in justice, and connected with the most important interests of the country." Mr. PITT concluded with moving

"That the House do now adjourn."

Mr. SHERIDAN rose next, not, he said, "from an idea that any exertions of his could give the least additional force to the arguments which his right honorable friend had urged with so much ability and eloquence; but in order to make some remarks on what had just fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He felt the utmost confidence in asserting, that the arguments of Mr. Fox had, in no one instance, been answered by the right honorable gentleman, though possessed of talents which seldom left him without resources upon such occasions. Mr. SHERIDAN had therefore this farther reason for being satisfied with the impressions which his honorable friend's animated and brilliant speech had made on his mind: he was fully persuaded, *that it was unanswerable*. By way of proof, he need only refer to the very reply made by Mr. PITT, who, with great ingenuity and art, had passed by and neglected all the arguments which carried with them the most irresistible conviction, and had totally misrepresented and mis-stated the few he had thought proper to notice. The question which had been put to the House for their investigation was, *Whether or no so great a portion of calamity had been suffered by the country during the progress of this unhappy war, as to shew that blame must be attached somewhere; and whether it was not becoming the dignity and character of the House to inquire where that blame lay?* Mr. PITT, however, had stated, that the motion was brought forward for the purpose of reversing the determinations of the House; and that it was too late, because the effect of it would be to make the House retract the whole of the declarations

they had made from the beginning of the session. This was a gross misrepresentation ; for the question of war and peace had been carefully kept out of sight during the whole of the speech of his honorable friend. The House, indeed had been called upon to inquire, whether they chose to pursue the same object by the same means ; and whether they would leave the execution of their designs in the same hands in which they had so long been vested ? According to Mr. PITT's mode of reasoning, no calamities which might befall the country, no neglect or misconduct of ministers, however productive of the most pernicious consequences, would justify a call upon the House to inquire into the actual state of the nation, or to investigate the causes of such calamities, and the effects of such misconduct. That right honorable gentleman had, indeed, allowed, at the conclusion of his speech, that the misconduct of ministers was a proper object of inquiry, and that, if it should be proved, a motion ought to be made for their removal, insinuating, at the same time, that successors should not be appointed who would disgrace the country. Mr. SHERIDAN did not believe it a difficult matter to find men, even in the lines of opposition, who would not disgrace the country so much as its present ministers. Another invidious insinuation had been thrown out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in pronouncing an eulogium on the conduct of the army and navy, as if Mr. Fox, by omitting to state their services, had forgotten their merit. The House, however, Mr. SHERIDAN observed, were too well acquainted with the candor of his right honorable friend, to allow that he had, upon any occasion, taken away from their merit, or lost an opportunity of paying that tribute of just applause, which the services and bravery of our army and navy had so repeatedly merited from every friend to the country. Mr. PITT had also contended that the discussion ought to have been brought forward previous to the vote of supply ; but, if

this had been done, would not the right honorable gentleman have said, that it could only proceed from a factious and turbulent spirit to agitate a question of such a nature while the enemy was at the door, and the House had not granted the aids that alone could enable the country to resist the dangers which threatened them? And now, when ministers had brought the country into a situation of the utmost peril, they told the House, that having agreed to provide for the necessities which their misconduct had brought on, it was pledged to support them with unlimited confidence, and without being informed how those necessities were produced! Did all inquiry cease, when the supplies were voted? Did they operate as a temporary act of indemnity and screen the minister from all the sins of the session? In that case, Mr. SHERIDAN thought that the House had better suspend its parliamentary functions, and vote a dictator at once, till the war was over, than continue them with such a disgraceful acquiescence. Having fully illustrated this leading point, he entered into a minute exposition of the other fallacies, mis-statements, and unfair conclusions in Mr. PITT's speech. The drains from our population were evident from a review of the present state of the recruiting service, where we saw regiments filled up with decrepid old men and boys. The increase of exports was temporary and unnatural, arising from the number of captures of our outward bound trade, which were to be supplied by fresh cargoes. As to the revenue of the country, and the efficiency of taxes, were one to be imposed on *places* and *pensions*, according to the example of an allied kingdom [Spain] it would be more productive than all the late expedients put together. Experience had sufficiently demonstrated the folly of relying on the cordiality of our allies: the king of Prussia's breach of faith was not the only instance: the same thing might be said of the Empress of Russia, who had never yet fulfilled one of the

stipulations to which she was pledged. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had treated in a very loose manner the remarks made by Mr. Fox, on the language of our ambassadors at foreign courts; and had highly extolled the moderation of the British cabinet towards neutral nations. The uniform tenor and spirit of that language, in all the instances which had been mentioned, shewed that those ambassadors acted in strict conformity to their instructions; and in what did the boasted moderation of the cabinet consist? It had been carried to the extremes of cringing and of mean submission towards Denmark, Sweden, and America, powers whom we dared not offend, while we bullied the petty states of Italy with the most outrageous insolence. We had called on them in a menacing tone to abandon their neutrality. Yet it had been expressly stated, in a speech from the throne, as a matter of praise, that this country had so long remained neuter, at the early periods of the contest with France. On what principle then of the law of nations could it become a crime in other states to preserve that very neutrality, which had been the boast of the country, said to be forced into the war? Mr. PITT had adopted another mode of shifting with respect to the affairs of Ireland; he had dwelt so long upon the topic, that any person, who had not heard Mr. Fox, would have supposed that an inquiry into the state of that country had been the sole object of the motion. Unfortunately, however, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was in the recollection of every gentleman in the House, that full three hours of Mr. Fox's speech had elapsed previously to his saying any thing on that part of the subject. It must also be remembered, that notice had been given of the present motion long before any account was received of the embroiled state of the sister kingdom. The whole, therefore, of Mr. PITT's remarks on that head fell to the ground. The subject was certainly very proper as a col-

lateral foundation for inquiry into the ruinous system pursued by ministers ; for when only this one circumstance remained in their climax of folly, that they should contrive to place the Irish in such a state as to hazard, through their irritation, a separation of the empire, it was a great aggravation of the rest of their misconduct."

Mr. SHERIDAN did not forget, in the wide range of his observations, to point out the bad effects of the temporizing policy which had been pursued with regard to France, in concealing the precise object of the war—a policy, by which the return to royalty, had the nation been so disposed, was rendered impossible ; and to which the great disunion among the allies might in some measure be ascribed. He pressed ministers very much to declare their views with respect to the sort of government they wished to see established in France. Could they not find time amidst their jobbing arrangement of places, which so much disgraced them, to agree upon that point? Whether they still speculated upon the destruction of republicanism, and the restoration of monarchy? If they indulged any lingering wish of this kind, he was certain it was directly against the welfare of the country. For his part, he could see nothing in the continuance of the horrid struggle, but the introduction of ferocious anarchy on the one hand, or of a vindictive despotism on the other. He had no alarm about the present republic. If their principles were so bad as represented, why not leave them to their own destruction, and desist from war? It was plain, that the acknowledgment of the republic must precede all negociation ; and it was only the pride and obstinacy of ministers that prevented them from retracting errors which they must do at last. Considering peace then as the ultimate object, and that agreeing to the present motion would be advancing one step towards it, he should for that reason, as well as for those already explained, vote with his right honorable friend.

Mr. CANNING, Mr. BASTARD, Mr. ROBINSON, Mr. MAJOR, and Mr. WILBERFORCE successively stated their objections to the proposed inquiry; after which Mr. Fox, availing himself of the privilege of reply which is always granted to the author of the motion, closed the debate with a short but energetic speech, to the following purport :

“ I feel it necessary to say a few words, in answer to what I have heard to-night, and chiefly to what has been urged by the right honorable gentleman who moved the question of adjournment. Gentlemen have partly misunderstood my meaning, if they consider that I have wished for a committee to inquire into the state of the nation on any one particular point; or that I wish particularly to agitate topics of war or peace, which have already been discussed in this House, and in which I have not had the good fortune to agree with the majority. I meant, by moving for the committee, to inquire into the conduct of the war in general, in order that we might see how His Majesty's ministers have acted. Gentlemen on the other side say, they do not wish to turn out ministers. They say too, that they do not wish to inquire into the conduct of the war. That is natural enough: the meaning of it is obvious. They do not wish for an inquiry; that is, they know that an inquiry is likely to influence the opinion of this House upon the conduct of ministers; and that after having been compelled to censure them, we shall, in justice to our own consistency, vote for an address to the throne for their removal. I said that this country was in a situation which, on the face of things, called for an inquiry, and therefore I moved for it; and I believe that the result would be, that this House could not, consistently with its own honor, refuse a vote of censure on ministers, and an address for their removal; and therefore it is not mysterious that some gentlemen should be unwilling to go into an inquiry. But are we indeed to

go *hand in hand* with the ministers, and are not to inquire into their conduct, lest the result should be that they must be removed? Are we, indeed, so very complaisant to administration, that rather than they should lose the power, the country should be lost. The right honorable gentleman [Mr. PITT] has insinuated something like a hint, that if he and his associates were to be dismissed, tomorrow, and others more able were to be appointed in their stead, neither His Majesty nor the public would look to those who support the present motion for their assistance. Now, Sir, upon that subject I have no objection to say what I feel, and what indeed I partly expressed on a former occasion.

“ If this war be to be carried on with more vigor than it has been on our part, and by men of greater capacity than the present ministers, but on the same principle as it has been hitherto avowed, and for the same object—and I know that there are many men who are friends enough to this war, to carry it on upon such terms—all I can say is, that there is not any thing His Majesty can offer to me—no, Sir, nor any thing that any Prince in Europe can offer to me, which should induce me to take any share in it. But is that, or can it be, a reason that this House should not inquire into the conduct of ministers, who have brought upon this country such calamities?—calamities, that have never been equalled in any period of its history! Even those who were originally, and who are still against any terms of negotiation for peace, should vote for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, and be ready to follow it up, if necessary, with an address to His Majesty to appoint some persons more likely to conduct it with success. The right honorable gentleman has said, that he is not answerable for what might be done by a minister abroad upon any particular occasion; an expression that is unworthy of any man who calls himself a minister. The declaration of a minister abroad may create a war between two nations.

Is it to be endured in this House that the right honorable gentleman should say, *such a declaration was not mine, but was the declaration of Mr. DRAKE, or of any other ambassador?* The right honorable gentleman has told the House to-night, *that the ministers have acted, with regard to neutral powers, according to the spirit of the law of nations, which will appear evident, when the subject comes to be inquired into;* and yet, with the same breath, he tells the House, *he will not consent to inquire into it at all.* Then he tells us, that this is a business which ought to have been inquired into before; and much stress is laid on the time in which I have made my motion. Why, Sir, we have not been negligent on this side of the House, in bringing forward questions upon the war. A motion was made early in the session for a negotiation for peace, which was negatived. Then came other public business, the budget, and several interesting subjects. It is also said, that I have brought on my motion, on account of the critical situation of Ireland. Now, Sir, with regard to that, I had formed a resolution of bringing this motion forward before the affairs of that country wore so serious an aspect as they do now, and before I heard one word of what has lately happened there. I do not recollect the particular day; but I am sure the fact is so; and I believe I gave notice in this House of my intention to move for a committee on the state of the nation before the late accounts from Ireland arrived. I cannot help alluding to what one honorable gentleman [Mr. BASTARD] has said to-night with regard to Ireland; he said, he should vote for this inquiry had I not declared my intention to move a resolution on that subject in the committee. If so, Sir, let him vote for the inquiry into the state of the nation generally; and let him vote against the resolution with regard to Ireland, when that comes to be proposed. With respect to Ireland, I conceive that what has happened there has arisen out of the faults of mini-

sters in this country. A great mischief to this country has been produced by the misconduct of ministers; and I say there should be an inquiry into that business, for the particular purpose of knowing who is really to blame, in order that we may proceed to censure, and, if necessary, to punish such ministers. On the conduct of the lord lieutenant I can only say, I have a strong opinion, that when this business is fully investigated, the result will be to the honor of that nobleman, and to the shame and confusion of the ministers in this country. That is my opinion; but what signifies what my opinion is? The House has no business with the opinions of individuals: it is its duty to inquire into the fact. But it seems there is a great delicacy on this subject. Now, Sir, I am of opinion, there should be none; for what any minister does in his official situation, is fair matter of inquiry in this House, whether it regard this country, or Ireland. I have heard it said, that we should not interfere with the parliament of Ireland, and that my motion has that tendency. I mean no such thing: I only mean to inquire into the conduct of ministers. These things are debated in the cabinet; and perhaps some things concerning acts of parliament in Ireland are debated in the cabinet. Now, I want to know, although I would not have this House interfere in the least degree, nor have the power of interfering with the parliament of Ireland; but I want to know, I say, upon what principle it is, that the cabinet should do more upon that topic than this House, or than the parliament of this country. I see no such principle: but I know that, with regard to any recommendation from the throne to the parliament of this or of that country, that is a matter for which ministers are liable to be called to account; for it is ministers who advise that recommendation. If it were not so, let me ask, what might the consequence be? Ministers may so conduct themselves that the situation of the two countries may be

in danger, most imminent danger; and can that happen, and yet that we shall be told that we cannot interfere? Sir, I do assert, that we have the power, and that we ought to exercise it, of calling for an inquiry; yes, Sir, of proceeding to punishment, for such malignant misconduct, on those who have been the cause of it. That such has been the conduct of ministers, is undeniable, and undenied. I have been told, that I am putting Ireland in danger by what I have said to-night! Pray, Sir, who has put Ireland in danger most? I who have moved for an inquiry into the state of it, or those who, by their mischievous conduct, have made that inquiry necessary? I, who respect both that and this country as much as any man in this House; or those who conduct themselves as if they regarded the interests of neither, when held in competition with their own power? Sir, I say, I have a right to call upon ministers to answer for the danger in which they have involved the two countries, and which I believe to be equally prejudicial to both. I wish next to know, whether it is to be laid down as a fixed principle, that the general failure of the army, and the general mischief which the conduct of ministers has occasioned, are not to be considered as *prima facie* evidence of the necessity of inquiring into their misconduct? The right honorable gentleman says, that my conduct, if not counteracted, would tend to lower the dignity of this country. That a man, who has himself so lowered the dignity of this country, who has brought it to the verge of ruin by the obstinacy and madness of his conduct, should presume even to think that any body else could lower it more than he has, is, I own, rather extraordinary. I desire to know, and I ask the minister to inform me, if he can—I ask any man in this House to inform me, when it was that I endeavoured to lower the dignity of this country? He alluded to the present war: what has been his conduct: and what did I advise this House upon that sub-

ject? I would have offered reasonable terms to France before the war commenced ; and, for that purpose, I proposed a negotiation : he affected to disdain it. What has been the event? Will even he himself now attempt to say, that there is a chance of making so good a peace now, as we might have had then? Does he even hope he can ever negotiate with the French in a situation less dishonorable to us than the present? I would have negotiated with them before a fight : he must negotiate after a fight, and after a defeat too, if he negotiates at all. I would have negotiated with them while we were rich in our resources, and our commerce was entire ; he must negotiate when both are desperately impaired. I would have negotiated before our allies were defeated, and while they were yet supposed to be in union ; he must negotiate after victory has been declared in favour of the enemy, and the allies have been deserting us and one another. After this, that such a man could possibly suppose he is supporting the dignity of this country, and that he should put himself on a footing with any gentleman who has not he the misfortune to be in the present administration, is an extraordinary thing ; but it is an assumption of merit which is peculiar to His Majesty's present council. In the mean time, *it is with heartfelt satisfaction I reflect, that in every thing I ever proposed, I HAVE SUPPORTED THE DIGNITY OF THIS COUNTRY : I regard it as a circumstance of good fortune to me, that I NEVER GAVE AN OPINION, BY WHICH ONE DROP OF BRITISH BLOOD WAS SHED, OR ANY OF ITS TREASURE SQUANDERED.* It has been my fortune to oppose, perhaps unsuccessfully, that which brought this country into a disastrous situation, I mean the American war—a war disastrous indeed ; but after all the calamity which it produced, we were happy then, compared with the situation of this country now. Good God ! Sir ! that there should be a moment, in comparison with which the American war

may be deemed a period of happiness ! and yet so it is ; so any person will find it to be, on examining them both. The calamities of the American war bear no resemblance to the present. Does the minister deny the fact ? He has never yet said it ; and I should be glad to hear him aver it now, for I am ready to answer him, if he does. The right honorable gentleman has thought fit to insinuate, that those with whom I act, and myself, never mention the glory of the British arms. The fact is notoriously otherwise. There is not one instance, in which we have withheld praise from any of our gallant heroes ; on the contrary, we have been proud to praise them. That right honorable gentleman was not a member of this House in the time of the American war ; but if he will take the trouble of inquiring, he may easily be informed of the part I took in praising the gallantry of the British troops. America, however, was lost : we are now fearing lest we should lose Ireland ; and I own to you, Sir, I tremble for the fate of Great Britain. Is it endurable, then, to hear a man accuse others of endeavouring to lower the dignity of this country, when we are doing all we can to save it, and are calling for an inquiry into the conduct of that very man, who has brought us to the very last stake, in which we are now contending for our very existence ? And shall it still be a question, who is the best friend to the honor of Great Britain ? This inquiry may not take place ; but I am glad an honorable gentleman [Mr. WILBERFORCE] has intimated his intention of bringing the subject forward in some other shape. He can do it with great propriety. But I wish again to ask, if this committee be not granted, what am I to say to my constituents, if they ask, *Who are the allies of this country ? What is our relative situation with the King of Prussia ? What with the Emperor ? What has been the conduct of administration with regard to the war ? What is the situation of Ireland ?* To all these questions I can only answer, *I can-*

not tell you any thing of these matters : the House of Commons would not grant me an inquiry : they went hand in hand with the minister. I wish the House of Commons to have credit with the people. I know there are enemies to this House ; and if you refuse this committee to inquire into the state of the nation, you will furnish more arguments against the House of Commons than ever were furnished by any injudicious theorist that ever wrote upon the subject."

Mr. PITT's question of adjournment was then put, and carried by a majority of 219 to 63—and Mr. Fox's motion was of course lost.

After continuing the war two campaigns more, the spirit of determined hostility seemed to abate ; and towards the close of the year 1796, lord MALMESBURY was sent to Paris to open a negotiation for peace ; but a message from the King to both Houses of Parliament informed them of the abrupt termination of that embassy. Upon this occasion, after the message had been read from the chair, on the 30th of December, Mr. PITT addressed the House to the following effect :

" I am perfectly aware, Sir, in rising upon the present occasion, that the motion which I shall have the honor to propose to the House, in consequence of His Majesty's most gracious message, and founded upon the papers with which it was accompanied, involves many great and important considerations. Whatever difference of opinion may be entertained upon some of the topics which they contain, I am sure there will exist only one sentiment with regard to the event which they announce. We must all concur in that deep and poignant regret which is naturally excited by the information that the negotiation, in which His Majesty was engaged, is abruptly broken off : a negotiation by which we fondly wished, and perhaps might have sanguinely hoped, that upon terms of peace, which it would have been wise, and prudent, and

honorable in this country to have embraced, we should at length have been enabled to have retired from a contest undertaken in compliance with the faith of treaties, and for the defence of our allies ; undertaken to repel the daring, unprincipled, and unprovoked aggression of the enemy ; undertaken for the maintenance of our own independence and the support of our own rights ; undertaken for the preservation of our constitution and laws, and in obedience to those principles of policy by which the conduct of England has so long and so gloriously been directed ; undertaken from a union of all these causes and a combination of all these motives, to a degree for which the annals of the world present no parallel. From the documents of which the House are now in possession, and from the proceedings of which now they are enabled to judge, I trust, it will appear, that if it was thought necessary to embark in the contest upon such urgent grounds, and such powerful considerations, His Majesty's ministers have evinced a perseverance equally sincere in their endeavours to restore peace to Europe upon fair, just, and honorable grounds in spite of the discouragements under which they laboured, and the difficulties which they had to encounter. To whatever cause, however, the failure of the negotiation is to be ascribed, it must be matter of regret to all, and to none more than myself. Whatever subject of personal anxiety I may have had, in addition to the common feelings of humanity, and for the general happiness of mankind, my sentiments are only those of disappointment. But I have the satisfaction of knowing that this feeling of disappointment is unaccompanied with any reflection, unmingled with regret, unembittered with despondency, as it must be evident to the world, that the event which we deplore can be attributed only to the pride, the ambition, the obstinacy, and the arrogant pretensions of the enemy. I feel this consolation annexed to the task which we have

now to perform, that we can come forward, not *unaware* of the difficulty, yet not dismayed by the prospect, prepared to review the situation in which we are placed, to ask what are the causes from which the failure of the negotiation proceeded, what opinion it authorizes us to form, what conduct it requires us to pursue, what duty it imposes upon us to discharge, what efforts we are called upon to exert in our own defence, and what support and assistance policy demands that we should grant to our allies for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of a contest in which we are compelled to persevere.

“As to the next point which I shall have to consider, I cannot expect equal unanimity; not, however, that it is much more complicated, although undoubtedly not so self-evident. I allude to the failure of the negotiation, in point of terms, and which renders a continuance of the war necessary; but have we not the consolation that the aggression has uniformly been on the side of the enemy, and that nothing has been wanting on the part of this country to restore peace, on the grounds on which peace alone would be desirable? When we wish for peace, we wish for a secure and permanent peace, and the secure and permanent possession of those blessings with which peace is accompanied.

“If, in that necessity to which we are now subjected, of pursuing with vigor the war in which we are engaged, we can look for consolation, amid the sacrifices with which it will be attended, to the original aggression of the enemy by which it was occasioned, to the consideration that no endeavour has been omitted which can evince our earnest and sincere desire of peace, and that this sentiment still predominates to put an end to the contest upon those principles which can alone render that event desirable, which can secure a peace, safe, honorable, and permanent; which can restore those blessings which it is calculated to produce, and those advantages for which it

is worthy to be desired ; if we have adhered to these considerations, we have done every thing which it was in our power to perform. We may lament the failure of His Majesty's exertions upon this occasion, but at least we have not to regret that they have been wholly without advantage. They must prove to which party the prolongation of the war is to be imputed ; they will tend at once to unite England and to divide France ; they will animate our endeavours with new energy and new confidence, while they must have the effect to enfeeble and to embarrass the operations of the enemy. The question is not merely how far His Majesty's ministers and those to whose province it is committed to judge of the terms upon which peace ought to be concluded, and what offers are to be proposed, (a duty always attended with difficulty, but in the present circumstances peculiarly embarrassed and unusually critical) acted properly in the conditions upon which they were willing to treat : but after the propositions which were made had been rejected ; when instead of yours, terms utterly inadmissible and glaringly extravagant were substituted ; when, to a peremptory rejection was added the refusal of all farther discussion ; when the negotiation was abruptly broken off ; and His Majesty's ambassador was sent away ; when all this is accompanied with a proceeding still more insulting than the original dismissal ; when a condition is reserved, which is not even the semblance, but which stands undisguised as the most glaring mockery of negotiation ; it remains for the House to judge whether any thing has been wanting upon the part of ministers, whether any thing more is required to display the sentiments and the views of the enemy. It remains to be seen whether there are any gentlemen in this House, who, as friends to peace, as friends to their country, who, consistent with the principles of statesmen, or the feelings of patriots, can discover any alternative in the ultimate line

of conduct to be pursued. From the manner in which what I have now said has been received, I hope it will not be incumbent upon me to dwell more particularly upon this topic, before I advert to others which come previously to be considered.

“ The two leading points which arise from the views connected with the subject in discussion, are, the sentiment which it is proper to express upon the steps to be taken by His Majesty for the purpose of obtaining peace, and then, combining the offers made, with the rejection of the enemy, and the circumstances with which it was accompanied, what sentiment parliament and the nation ought to entertain, with regard to the conduct necessary to be adopted for our own security ; for maintaining the cause of our allies ; and protecting the independence of Europe. After the communications which have already been made of the former steps taken by this country, and on the part of the Emperor, for the purpose of bringing the contest to a termination, it would be unnecessary to dwell upon the particulars of these transactions. I would beg leave, however, to remind the House, that, in March 1796, offers were made to the French government, by His Majesty’s envoy at Basle, Mr. WICKHAM, to treat for a general peace, in a manner which of all others had been most usual in a complicated war, a mode sanctioned by custom and justified by experience, which had been commonly found successful in attaining the objects for which it was intended ; yet this proposal met with a refusal, and was affected to be received as a mark of insincerity. We find the enemy advancing a principle, to which I shall afterwards more particularly advert, so manifestly unjust, and so undeniably absurd, that whatever difference of opinion subsisted upon other points, there was no man living had the temerity to support it. The question upon the former discussions to which this transaction gave rise, was, whether the principle to which I

allude was fairly imputed? In the answer to Mr. WICKHAM's note, when we found the government of France advancing a law of her own internal constitution, to cancel the obligation of treaties, and to annul the public law of Europe, the only doubt was, whether it was fair and candid, upon such a foundation, to ascribe to the Directory the reality of such a pretension? The principle itself I am sure can never be successfully defended upon any law of nations, or any argument of reason. The Emperor too, in spite of the refusal, with which the application of this country had been received; in spite of the discouragement which a new attempt presented; did, at the opening of the campaign, renew the offers for negotiating a general peace upon the principles upon which the proposition of this country had been founded. In the course of this eventful year, so chequered with remarkable vicissitudes, before the successes of the enemy, which unfortunately so rapidly followed the breaking of the armistice, and before the glorious tide of victory by which the latter period of the campaign had been distinguished, many instances occurred for the application of their principle. The proposition of the Emperor, however, was received nearly in the same manner with our own; and even the answer which it produced was conceived in the same tone, and conveyed the same unfounded imputation, excepting that there were some topics with regard to points of etiquette, and differences about form, which upon the application of this country, had not been observed till they were renewed upon the perusal of reports of certain proceedings in this House, whether faithfully detailed or not I will not inquire. The answer which the Emperor received was, that he might send a plenipotentiary to Paris to treat for a peace, consistent with the laws and constitution of the Republic. Notwithstanding the discouragement which the repeated experience of former disappointments was calculated to pro-

duce, His Majesty, retaining that desire of putting a period to hostilities by which he was uniformly animated, felt some hope from the distress to which France was reduced, and from the embarrassments under which she laboured, that a renewed proposal would be welcomed with a more friendly reception. To shew that the inveterate disposition which the enemy had manifested did not discourage His Majesty from giving another chance of success to his ardent wishes, without having witnessed any indication upon their part, of sentiments more pacific or more conciliatory, without their having discovered any retraction of the principles which had been advanced in reply to his first proposal, His Majesty determined to try the experiment of a new attempt of negotiation, to the circumstances of which I shall again recur.

“ Upon many occasions during the present contest it had been discussed, whether it was politic for this country to appeal to negotiation in whatever circumstances the enemy were placed. Gentlemen on the other side were accustomed to press the argument, that in no situation could negotiation be humiliating. If a sincere desire of peace, it was said, does exist, there are modes of ascertaining the dispositions of the enemy, of making your wishes known, and making advances to the attainment of the object, without involving any question of etiquette, or provoking any discussion of forms. Of all the modes then recommended, that of application through the medium of a neutral power was the most approved. After the reception which the successive proposals of this country, and of the Emperor, received at Basle, the mode of application by a neutral power, by that very power which had been again and again cited as an instance of the good faith of the French government, and their respect for independent states, was at length adopted, and the Danish minister was pitched upon for this purpose. In this proceeding it was not the object to announce on what terms

this country was willing to conclude a peace, not to avoid any objections of etiquette, not to evade any discussion of preliminary formalities, but merely to ascertain the point, whether the Directory would grant passports to a confidential person whom His Majesty was willing to send to Paris. The application was accordingly made by the Danish resident, and after an interval of some days' delay, this step was allowed to pass in silence; to a written application no answer was returned; and at last a verbal notification was given, that the Directory could not listen to any indirect application through the medium of neutral powers, and that a plenipotentiary might proceed to the frontiers, and there wait for the necessary passports.

“ I would now ask the House to judge, if it had really been the wish of His Majesty's ministers to avail themselves of the plausible grounds for proceeding no farther, which were then presented, which could so easily be justified by a reference to the conduct of the French government, and by the dispositions by which experience had proved them to be guided, would they have been very eager again to try the issue of new attempts? But even to this they submitted, and by a flag of truce sent to the governor of Calais, directly demanded the necessary passports. The directory, now feeling the eagerness with which this country pursued the desire of terminating the contest by negotiation, and foreseeing the odium with which the refusal would be attended, were compelled, I repeat, were compelled, to grant the passports, and thus to afford to His Majesty the opportunity of presenting the outline of the terms upon which peace might be restored. Under circumstances like these, with the experience of an uniform tenor of conduct which testified the very reverse of any disposition to a cordial co-operation for the re-establishment of peace, there was little hope that the French government would keep pace with the offers pro-

posed by this country, and it was foreseen that it would rest with His Majesty, after stimulating their reluctant progress through every part of the discussion, to encounter the farther difficulty of proposing specific terms. In this embarrassing situation the first thing to be done was to endeavour to establish what is at once conformable to reason, sanctioned by usage, and agreeable to universal practice since negotiation was first reduced to a system; I mean some basis upon which the negotiation was to be founded. How usual such a practice had been, it would be unnecessary to argue; how reasonable, it would be impossible to dispute; as it must be evident that such a mode of proceeding must conduce to abridge the delay with which a discussion of this kind is apt to be attended, to afford a clue to that labyrinth of complicated interests that are to be considered, and to supply some rule of stating mutual propositions. It would be equally unnecessary, as this mode was to be adopted in a negotiation where we, for ourselves directly, had so little to ask, and for our allies so much, and where the interests of Europe demanded such important claims; where we had to treat with a country which had advanced principles that destroyed all former establishments; that cancelled all received laws and existing treaties; that overthrew all experience of past proceeding. This basis then was to be a basis of compensation, not of ambition or aggrandizement, but that compensation which was due for the conquests achieved by the valor and perseverance of our forces, from the acquisitions gained by the enemy; a basis than this I am confident more equitable, or more just, better calculated to secure to the interests of our allies, to maintain the independence of Europe, or more honorable to this country, never was proposed. But whether this basis be reasonable or not, is not now so much the inquiry, as another proof of the views of the enemy is disclosed, and a fresh instance of the inveterate disposition of the French

government is displayed. Before any explicit answer to the basis proposed was returned ; when it was understood that it was to be rejected, lord MALMESBURY is required, within twenty-four hours, to present his *ultimatum*. It appears, however, from the able manner in which lord MALMESBURY conducted himself upon this demand, that this demand was not insisted upon, and to his explanation, they replied only by an evasive answer, which announced their refusal of the basis proposed, and intimated the extravagant pretensions they were desirous to substitute. I will now put to the recollection of the House the public discussions, to which the subject of the basis of negotiation, presented to the French government, gave rise. I will not say that the public was unanimous, nor will I pretend to decide in what proportions it was divided. None, however, doubted that this basis would not be agreed to. In the public discussion to which the plan was subjected, (by this I do not mean parliamentary discussions,) and in the writings which it produced, particularly in the metropolis, the argument maintained was, that the principle was unreasonable, and ought not to have been offered. The Directory, however, thought proper to accept what it was argued in this country ought to have been refused, and the principle of compensation was admitted.

“ Having, I trust, shewn, therefore, from the extorted confession which arises out of every statement, that the basis of compensation was accepted, there follow the particular terms, as far as they were the subject of negotiation. It is a point well understood that the final terms to be considered as binding upon the parties, never form a part of the original proposition. What, however, is the case here? When the first advances were made by this country, they were met by no corresponding offers by the Directory ; every difficulty that was started and removed, prepared only new cavils ; the demands made by

us were accompanied by no disclosure of the terms to which they would accede. After a reluctant admission of the basis, they insisted upon a specific statement of the objects of compensation. Under circumstances similar to those upon which the negotiation was begun, the difficulties with which it must be attended are obvious, and the common practice has been, as far as possible, to divide them, to render the statement of terms mutual, to give reciprocally, and at the same time, the explanations, the concessions, and the demands upon which each party is disposed to insist. The propriety of this is obvious. Without such a mode of proceeding it is impossible to know what value the one sets upon a particular concession, or a particular acquisition, and upon what conditions this is to be abandoned, and how the other is to be compensated. This difficulty obtains in all negotiations, more particularly where doubts are entertained of the sincerity of the party with whom you have to deal, but most of all when no advance, no reciprocal offer is made. How difficult then must it have been, under all the circumstances of this case, to produce specific terms with any probability of success or advantage? Yet the same motives which had induced His Majesty on former occasions to surmount the obstacles presented by the enemy, induced him here likewise to remove every pretence of cavil. Plans were given in, signed by lord MALMESBURY, stating likewise terms for the allies of this country. In the outline, two things are to be kept separate and distinct—the compensations demanded for our allies, and those which were intended to protect the balance of Europe.

“ I need not argue again that a basis of compensation is reasonable ;—that I am entitled to assume as admitted : but to what enormous extent it was retracted, I am now to state. During that period of adverse fortune which has since by the valor and glory of the gallant Imperial army so remarkably been retrieved, considerable posses-

sions belonging to Austria and other states were added to the acquisitions of the enemy. On the other hand, the success of our brave troops retarded indeed in particular quarters by some untoward circumstances, though not obstructed, had added to our distant possessions, and extended, by colonial acquisitions, the sources of our commerce and wealth, and our prosperity, to a degree unparalleled in the annals of this country. Feeling the pressure, which the war, no doubt, gave to our commerce, but feeling too that it neither affected the sources of our commerce, nor would ultimately retard the full tide of our prosperity, I was convinced that the temporary embarrassments which occurred, were less the effect of a real distress, than of an accidental derangement arising from our increasing capital and extended commerce. In looking round, you discovered no symptom of radical decay, no proof of consuming strength; and although I have been accused of advancing a paradox, while I maintained this proposition, I am convinced that the embarrassment, stated as an evidence of decline, was a proof of the reality and the magnitude of our resources. I do not state these circumstances, to give any one an idea that I do not ardently wish for peace, but to shew that we are not yet arrived at so deplorable a state of wretchedness and abasement, as to be compelled to make any insecure and dishonorable compromise. What, on the other hand, was the situation of the enemy? They at first indeed were enabled to employ gigantic means of support, which from their extravagant nature, were temporary, not permanent.—They find also the additional expedient of disseminating new, unheard of, destructive principles; these they poured forth from the interior of France into all the quarters of Europe, where no rampart could be raised to oppose the dangerous, the fatal inundation. Although madness and fanaticism carried them thus far for a time, yet no rational man will deny that those persons formed a

fair and reasonable conclusion, who thought that such resources could not be attended with either duration or stability. I need hardly recur to the subject of French finance, though it has a very considerable effect indeed upon the question. I have on this subject been accused of bringing forward groundless surmises, of using fanciful reasoning, of stating elaborate theories without authority. I have even been complimented on my dexterity at this sort of argument, for the kind purpose of afterwards converting it into ridicule; but I shall not now stop to confirm what in this respect I have formerly asserted. I may surely, however, suppose that the admissions of the executive directory are true, particularly when officially conveyed in the form of a message to one of their councils. Are we not told by themselves, that the only pay of their troops are the horrors of nakedness and famine; that their state contractors, their judges, and all other public functionaries, receive no part of their salaries; that the roads are impassable; that the public hospitals and general interests of charity are totally neglected; that nothing, in short, remains in a state of organization, but murder and assassination. Is this a true picture drawn by themselves, and can this be the time for Europe to prostrate itself at the foot of France,—suppliantly to bow the knee, and ignominiously to receive its law?

“ If these considerations would not have justified this country in refusing to treat unless upon the principle of restoring to the Emperor the territories of which he has been stripped, at least it is sufficient reason to entitle us to refuse to the French republic in the moment of debilitated power and exhausted resource, what we should have disdained to grant to France in the proudest days of her prosperous and flourishing monarchy. It was reason enough why we should not desert our allies, nor abandon our engagements, and why we should not agree to yield

up to France for the pretence of preventing future wars, what for two centuries our ancestors thought it wise to contend to prevent the French from obtaining possession of; and why, after the recorded weakness of the republic, we ought not to resign without a struggle, what the power and the riches of France in other times could never extort. What then were we to attain by the conquests we had achieved? For ourselves, we had nothing to ask; we demanded the return of no ancient possessions; we sued not for liberty to maintain our independence, to reject the fraternal embrace, and prevent the organization of treason.—These do not rest upon the permission of the enemy; they depend upon the valor, the intrepidity, and the patriotism of the people of this country.—We desired, Sir, only to preserve our good faith inviolate, and were ready to sacrifice all our own advantages, to obtain what we could not honorably give away without the consent of the Emperor. Could we possibly ask less at the outset of a negotiation? I touch, no doubt, upon a delicate subject; but I ask, could we even have demanded the consent of the Emperor to ask less? Whatever might have been the disposition of the Emperor to peace, would he have been content to agree to inferior terms, when the campaign was not closed—when the enemy were yet struck with the effects of the brilliant and glorious success with which the Imperial arms have lately been attended on the side of the Rhine,—when the exertions in Italy might have been expected to communicate to the affairs of Austria in that quarter the same tide of victory by which the frontiers of Germany were distinguished? Could we have asked less, consistently with the good faith we owe to that ally, to whose exertions and to whose victories we have been so much indebted;—that ally to whom we are so closely bound by congenial feelings, with whom we participate in the glory of adversity retrieved, and of prosperity restored? In doing this, I

am confident the House will agree in thinking that we do not do too much.

“ By the terms proposed, all the territory between the Rhine and the Moselle was to be ceded by France, subject to future modification. When the French conquests in Italy were stated as objects of restitution, it was not from that to be inferred that Savoy and Nice were included, for in no geographical view could they be considered as component parts of that country. All the propositions underwent discussion between the plenipotentiary of His Majesty and the French minister; only the British minister informed the minister of France, that as to the Netherlands, His Majesty could on no account retract any part of his propositions, but that every thing else should be subject to modification. These offers, Sir, I maintain to have been extremely liberal in their principle, and more so, when we consider the application of it. We carried the principle of compensation to the fullest extent, when we offered to give up all we had taken, reserving one subject only for consideration, which depended on a treaty, and which I shall presently mention; and we asked no more than what, by the strictest ties of justice and honor we were bound to demand. Let me appeal to every one present, if this conduct was not fair, just, and reasonable; if it did not bespeak sincere intentions and an anxious wish on the part of His Majesty to procure peace consistently with good faith, and security to himself and his allies, and if it was not entitled to a candid reception from the enemy? As to the value of the French possessions which we offered to give up, it must be confessed that the same evils, with which France has been afflicted, have been extended to the colonial possessions; they have undoubtedly been much depreciated, much impoverished; but after all, they are of infinite importance to the commerce and marine of France. The valuable post of St. Domingo; the military and commercial ad-

vantages of Martinique ; the peculiarly favorable situation of St. Lucia ; the importance of Tobago to this country ; when we combine these, and place them in an united point of view, we have some reason to doubt whether there was not some degree of boldness on the part of His Majesty's ministers to make such overtures ; we have some reason to suspect the wisdom of the measure, rather than to cavil at the insufficiency of the offer.

“ I come now more particularly to mention what relates to the Spanish part of St. Domingo, in the late negotiation. By a former treaty with Spain, made at the peace of Utrecht, in the year 1713, Spain engages not to alienate any of her possessions in America and the West Indies, without the consent of Great Britain. Have we not then a right to take advantage of this circumstance, on the present occasion, and to hold out our consent to this alienation, as a part of the compensation offered on the part of this country ? In what consists the right of the French to the Spanish parts of St. Domingo ? Is it the right of possession ? No ! they never yet have been in possession. Is it then merely the right of title ? No ! for their title is derived from the alienation of the Spaniards, who had no right to transfer it without the consent of this country. But it may be said, that this treaty is old and obsolete. On the contrary, having been kept sacred up to the year 1796, it has gained strength by a long prescription ; besides it has been recognized and confirmed at the end of every war since that time, and particularly so in the definitive treaty of 1783. It may be objected, however, and has indeed been urged on this occasion, that England, herself has violated this treaty in the transaction of Pensacola and Florida ; but this argument depends upon an obvious fallacy. The agreement, with respect to the Spanish dominions in America and the West Indies, was made between this country and Spain. Now, although the two parties to the agreement may, by con-

sent at pleasure, modify their respective interests, it does not follow that either party can, without the consent, and to the disadvantage of the other, introduce the interests of third parties. Upon every view of this subject then, I ask if we have not a fair and reasonable right to avail ourselves of the advantages arising from the treaty of Utrecht?

“ Sir, I think, that from the great extent of the subject, it will be unnecessary for me to trouble the House with any farther observation on that part of it; but I must request the attention of the House to the nature of the terms proposed with respect to the meditated peace between this country and her allies: and first with respect to Holland, a country which, although now hostile to us, I cannot help considering as having, at the commencement of the present war, been concerned in alliance with us in carrying it on, and connected in our interest by every tie of internal policy—a country which is now only opposed to us in consequence of the restraint imposed by the overbearing arms of France. However, Sir, notwithstanding Holland was our ally, and an ally, whose protection against the common enemy was one of the causes of our entering into the war; yet, as circumstances have occurred which compelled Holland to become the enemy of this country, I must, of necessity, treat her as such: I must consider her in the relation in which she stands with respect to France, though, at the same time I cannot bring myself to forget she was formerly an ally, whose friendship was attended with reciprocal advantages to herself and to this country. I am satisfied, if it were possible to replace Holland in the situation in which she formerly stood, and restore her legitimate government, not nominally, but permanently and effectually, that such a restoration would undoubtedly redound to the advantage of this country. But as it is perhaps a question of too remote contingency to consider the advantage which

we should acquire by the restoration of Holland to her former system, such an event, either nominally or really, being extremely unlikely under the present aspect of things, I shall therefore refrain from arguing the point.

“ Now, Sir, as to the conduct pursued on the part of this country, with regard to her connections with other powers, and supposing for the present that Holland may for a time remain subject to France, I may be allowed to assert that the terms proposed by this country, on behalf of her allies, were such as could only be dictated by a principle of moderation, of disinterestedness, and earnest desire of peace. This country having nothing to ask for herself, was induced to surrender a considerable part, nay, almost the whole of her acquisitions, for the purpose of inducing the French to give up to our allies that territory she had wrested from them.

“ The continental possessions which France had acquired from Holland, might perhaps be subject of discussion, in what manner they were best to be arranged, at once for the interest of Holland and of the allies. But these and the conquests made by this country must be considered, in the view of restitution, as merely an addition to the French power. We ought to consider that those possessions, with regard to which no relation was to be admitted, were to be retained, in order that they might not become acquisitions to the French government. In refusing to yield them up, we only refuse to put into the hands of the enemy the means of carrying into effect the deep-laid schemes of ambition they have long cherished, and the plan they have conceived of undermining our Indian empire, and destroying our Indian commerce, by ceding out of our own hands what may be deemed the bulwark of the wealth of this country, and the security of the Indian empire. These, indeed, were refused to be given up to our enemies; but every thing else, which the valor and the arms of this country had ac-

quired, which was valuable, was proposed to be made matter of negotiation. This, Sir, was the nature of the propositions made at the very first moment when the negotiation was commenced ; and I again submit to the final decision of the House, whether a proposition, including the restoration of every thing valuable which we had acquired, except that which we could not forego without manifest detriment to the most important interests of the country, was not founded in liberality and sincerity. Sir, I must beg leave to observe, that on this part of the subject I have been the more anxious to be explicit, because it is that part on which I lay the more particular stress, as tending to prove to the House, that every thing was done at the commencement, every thing distinctly stated, on which this country was willing to enterin to a negotiation. I am the more desirous of impressing the House with this part of my argument, because I feel it material, in order to enable them to form a determinate, precise idea of the character and prominent features of the negotiation itself. In return to the statements of compensation proposed by this country, the French government presented no *projet* of their own ; they afforded no room for discussion ; because they were actuated by motives very distant from conciliation.

“ This much I have thought it necessary to state, in vindication of the character of myself and colleagues that the House may be enabled to see that we never lost sight of the idea of a peace advantageous for our allies, safe for Europe, and honorable to this country. With regard to any specific terms of peace, which it might be proper to adopt or refuse, I do not think it would be wise for the House to pronounce. This may still be considered as a dormant negotiation, capable of being renewed ; and it would be impolitic to give a pledge to any specific terms, to which it might be impossible to adhere, and which can never be incurred without rashness. No man can be pledged to any particular terms, because in these he must

be guided by a view of collateral circumstances, and a comparative statement of resources. All that I wish parliament to pronounce is, that they will add their testimony to the sincerity with which His Majesty has endeavoured to restore peace to Europe, and their approbation of the steps which were employed for its attainment. But even after their rejection of every proposition that was advanced, after all the difficulties they started, after all the cavils they employed, after all the discouragements which they presented, when, at last, the French government had been compelled to open the discussion, the first thing that happens, after requiring a note containing specific proposals, is a captious demand to have it signed by Lord MALMESBURY. This demand was complied with to deprive them of every pretence for breaking off the negotiation, and immediately they call for an *ultimatum* in twenty-four hours. The impossibility of complying with such a demand is obvious. Was it possible to reconcile discordances, to smooth opposition, or pronounce good understanding in this manner? Does it come within the scope of negotiation? Is an *ultimatum*, which means that demand which is to come the nearest to the views of all parties, and to state the lowest terms that could be offered, thus to be made out at random, without knowing what the enemy would concede on their part, or what they would accept on ours? A proposal, drawn up in such a manner, without explanation, without information, could have no good effect. It is a demand contrary to all reason, and to all principle. With such a demand, therefore, it was impossible to comply; and, in consequence, Lord MALMESBURY received orders to quit Paris in forty-eight hours, and the territories of the Republic as soon as possible.

“Perhaps, however, I shall be told, that the negotiation is not broken off, and that the French government have pointed out a new basis upon which they are still

willing to proceed. There are two things upon this subject not unworthy of consideration. The time at which they propose this new basis, and what sort of basis it is that they propose. After having approved and acted upon the basis proposed by His Majesty's government; after having acknowledged, and, to all appearance, cordially acquiesced in it, as the ground of negotiation; after having demanded an *ultimatum* at the very commencement of this negotiation, and before any discussion had taken place, to be delivered in to the Directory in the space of twenty-four hours; and, after dismissing the ambassador of the king with every mark of ignominy and insult, they propose a new basis, by which the negotiation is to be carried on by means of couriers. And what is the reason they assign for this new basis? Because Lord MALMESBURY acted in a manner purely passive, and because he could assent to nothing without despatching couriers to obtain the sanction of his Court. Here one cannot help remarking the studied perverseness of the temper of the French government. When a courier was despatched to Paris, at the instance of a minister of a neutral power, in order to get a passport from the French government, it was denied. A courier could not even obtain a passport, though the application was made to the Executive Directory, through the medium of the Danish minister. The request of the Danish minister was not enough; nothing could satisfy them but a British minister. Well, a British minister was sent. At the commencement of the negotiation he had occasion frequently to send despatches to his Court, because it is very well known that there are a great number of difficulties which attend the opening of every negotiation, and because Lord MALMESBURY had been sent to Paris before the preliminaries, which are usually settled by means of couriers, were arranged. While these preliminaries were in a course of settling, Lord MALMESBURY's presence was

barely endured, and the frequent despatches of his couriers were subjects of animadversion; but no sooner were these preliminaries settled, and the British minister delivered in a *projet*, when there was less necessity for despatching couriers, when the period for discussion was arrived, when the personal presence of an ambassador was particularly necessary, and when the king's minister announced to the French government that he was prepared to enter into discussion upon the official memorials containing his *projet*, than he was ordered to quit Paris, and leave the negotiation to be carried on by means of couriers. Such is the precise form, and it was impossible to devise a better, in which a studied insult, refined and matured by the French Directory, was offered to his Britannic Majesty.

"I now come to state the broad, plain ground on which the question rests, as far as the terms upon which we are invited to treat on this new basis, are concerned. After having started a variety of captious objections at the opening of the negotiation, after the preliminaries were with much difficulty adjusted, after an *ultimatum* was demanded, almost before discussion had commenced, after the King's minister was ordered, in the most insulting manner, to leave the territories of France, after a retraction, by the Executive Directory, of the original basis of negotiation, and the substitution of a new one in its place, they demand not as an *ultimatum* but as a preliminary, to be permitted to retain all those territories of which the chance of war has given them a temporary possession, and respecting which they have thought proper, contrary to every principle of equity and the received laws of nations, to pass a constitutional law, declaring, as they interpret it, that they shall not be alienated from the republic. Now whether this be the principle of their constitution or not, upon which I shall afterwards have occasion to make some observations, it was at least natu-

rally to be supposed that the principle had been virtually set aside, when the former basis of negotiation was recognized by the French Directory ; for it must have been a strange admission of the principle of reciprocal compensations, indeed, if they were obliged, by the rules of their constitution, to retain all those conquests which we were most bound in duty and in honor to insist upon their giving up (not by any mystery of a new constitution, which is little known, and even among those who know it, of doubtful interpretation, but by public and known engagements), and if they were under the same constitutional necessity, which they certainly are, of demanding the restitution of those colonies formerly in their possession, but which they have lost in the course of the war. Notwithstanding, however, their disavowal of this principle in the admission of the former basis of the negotiation, it is now alleged, as a ground for the pretension, that they are entitled, as a matter of right, to demand from this country, not as an *ultimatum*, but as a preliminary to the discussion of any articles of treaty, that we shall make no proposals inconsistent with the laws and constitution of France. I know of no law of nations which can, in the remotest degree, countenance such a perverse and monstrous claim. The annexation of territory to any state by the government of that state, during the continuance of the war in which they have been acquired, can never confer a claim which supersedes the treaties of other powers, and the known and public obligations of the different nations of Europe. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the separate act of a separate government can operate to the dissolution of the ties subsisting between other governments, and to the abrogation of treaties previously concluded ; and yet this is the pretension to which the French government lay claim, and the acknowledgment of which they hold out, not as an *ultimatum*, but as a preliminary of negoti-

ation to the king of Great Britain and his allies. In my opinion, there is no principle of the law of nations clearer than this ; that when in the course of war any nation acquires new possessions, such nation has only temporary right to them, and they do not become property till the end of the war. This principle is incontrovertible, and founded upon the nature of things. For, supposing possessions thus acquired to be immediately annexed to the territory of the state by which the conquest was made, and that the conqueror was to insist upon retaining them, because he had passed a law that they should not be alienated, might not the neighbouring powers, or even the hostile power, ask who gave you a right to pass this law ? What have we to do with the regulations of your municipal law ? or, what authority have you as a separate state, by any annexation of territory to your dominions, to cancel existing treaties, and to destroy the equilibrium established among nations ? Were this pretension to be tolerated, it would be a source of eternal hostility, and a perpetual bar to negotiation between the contending parties ; because the pretensions of the one would be totally irreconcilable with those of the other.

“ This pretension in the instance of France has been as inconsistent in its operations as it was unfounded in its origin. The possessions which they have lost in the West Indies in the course of the war, they made independent republics ; and what is still more singular, Tobago, which they have lost in the war, and which is retained by British arms, is a part of indivisible France. I should not be surprized to hear that Ireland, in consequence of the rumour which has been circulated of their intention to attempt an invasion upon that country, is constitutionally annexed to the territory of that republic, or even that the city of Westminster is a part of indivisible France. There is a distinction, no doubt, between the Netherlands and the West India islands ; but it whimsically happens that

this principle of law, that this constitutional pretension is at least applicable to those possessions upon which it is held out as operating by the French government, and that the Austrian Netherlands, even by the letter of their own constitution, ought to be exempted from its operation. I own I am little qualified to read a lecture upon the French constitution, and perhaps I shall be accused, in my interpretation of it, of pretending to understand it better than they do themselves. Here I must remind my accusers, however, that even M. DELACROIX, that great master of the law of nations, allows that on this point the constitution is not perfectly clear, and gives that particular interpretation of it upon the authority of the best Publicists. I again repeat it, that in discussing the terms of a treaty with France, I am not obliged to know either her constitution or her laws, because it was unreasonable for her to advance a pretension upon a foundation inconsistent with the received law of nations, and the established nature of things. But it will demonstrate their insincerity, and the shallowness of the subterfuges to which they have been obliged to have recourse, if I can shew that no such law is in existence, and that their constitution leaves the government entirely at liberty to dispose of the possessions which they have acquired in war, in any way they may think proper. I have looked through this voluminous code," [holding a copy of the constitution in his hand] "and I think it may be considered as an instance that a constitution, upon paper, digesting and regulating the conduct of municipal jurisprudence, as well as of foreign relations, does not lead to the best application of the true principles of political economy. In the copy of their constitution, all I find upon the subject is a declaration that France is one and indivisible, which is followed by a long list of departments. And here I would recommend it to gentlemen to read the report upon which this decree was founded, in which they will find

that it was passed for the avowed purpose of obtaining for France an indisputable ascendant in Europe, and of suppressing the trade and commerce of rival nations. Overlooking, however, the principle of the decree, if it was found inapplicable to the possessions of the French in the East and West Indies, which they had previous to the war, it was certainly much more inapplicable to the Austrian Netherlands, of which they have got possession in the course of the war; and therefore the government, in holding out the principle as operating upon the latter and not the former, apply it to that part of their territory to which it is least applicable.

“ If we look at the provisions under the next title, *respecting relations with foreign powers*, the argument against the existence of any such principle in their constitution is confirmed; for we find the executive government is there vested with the full powers of treating, but all their treaties must be ratified by the legislative bodies, with the singular exception of secret articles, which it is in the power of the Directory to put in execution, without being ratified, a proof that they are authorized by the constitution to alienate territories belonging to the Republic. Allowing, however, that it is a principle of their constitution, is it an evil without a remedy? No! M. DELACROIX confesses that it may be remedied, but not without the inconvenience of calling the primary assemblies. And are we then, after all the exertions that we have made in order to effect the object of general pacification, and after being baffled in all our efforts by the stubborn pride and persevering obstinacy of the French government, after our propositions have been slighted, and our ambassador insulted, are we now to consent to sacrifice our engagements, and to violate our treaties, because, forsooth, it would be attended with some inconvenience for them to call their primary assemblies, in order to cancel a law which is incompatible with the prin-

ciple of fair negotiation? Shall we forget our own honor, our own dignity, and our own duty, so far as to acquiesce in a principle, as a preliminary to negotiation, intolerable in its tendency, unfounded in fact, inconsistent with the nature of things, and inadmissible by the law of nations?

“ But this is not all the sacrifice they demand. This is not all the degradation to which they would have us submit. You must also engage, and as a preliminary too, to make no propositions which are contrary to the laws of the constitution, and the *treaties* which bind the Republic. Here they introduce a new and extraordinary clause, imposing a restriction still more absurd and unreasonable than the other. The Republic of France may have made secret treaties which we know nothing about, and yet that government expects that we are not to permit our propositions to interfere with these treaties. In the former instance we had a text upon which to comment, but here we are in the state of those diviners who were left to guess at the dreams which they were called upon to interpret. How is it possible for this country to know what secret articles there may be in the treaty between France and Holland? How can we know what the Dutch may have ceded to France, or whether France may not have an oath in Heaven never to give up the territories ceded to her by Holland? Who can know but her treaty with Spain contains some secret article, guaranteeing to the latter the restitution of Gibraltar, or some important possession now belonging to His Majesty? And how can I know whether the performance of all these engagements may not be included under the pretension which the French government now hold out? How is it possible for me to sound where no line can fathom? And even after you have acceded to these preliminaries, in what situation do you stand? After accepting of terms of which you are entirely ignorant, and giv-

ing up all that is of importance for you to keep, you at last arrive at a discussion of the government which France may chuse to give to Italy, and of the fate which she may be pleased to assign to Germany. In fact, the question is not, how much you will give for peace, but how much disgrace you will suffer at the outset, how much degradation you will submit to as a preliminary? In these circumstances, then, are we to persevere in the war with a spirit and energy worthy of the British name, and of the British character, or are we, by sending couriers to Paris, to prostrate ourselves at the feet of a stubborn, supercilious government, to do what they require, and to submit to whatever they may impose? I hope there is not an hand in His Majesty's councils that would sign the proposals, that there is not a heart in this House that would sanction the measure, and that there is not an individual in the British dominions who would act as the courier."

Mr. PITT concluded with moving,

"That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to assure His Majesty, that that House also felt the utmost concern that His Majesty's earnest endeavours to effect the restoration of peace had been unhappily frustrated, and that the negotiation in which he had been happily engaged, had been abruptly broken off by the peremptory refusal of the French government to treat except upon a basis evidently inadmissible, and by their having, in consequence, required His Majesty's plenipotentiary to quit Paris within forty-eight hours.

"To thank His Majesty for having directed the several memorials and papers which had been exchanged in the course of the late discussion, and the account transmitted to His Majesty of the final result, to be laid before the House.

"That they were perfectly satisfied, from the perusal of these papers, that His Majesty's conduct had been

guided by a sincere desire to effect the restoration of peace, on the principles suited to the relative situation of the belligerent powers, and essential for the permanent interests of His Majesty's kingdoms, and the general security of Europe: whilst his enemies had advanced pretensions at once inconsistent with those objects, unsupported even on the grounds on which they were professed to rest, and repugnant both to the system established by repeated treaties; and to the principles and practice which had hitherto regulated the intercourse of independent nations.

"To assure His Majesty, that, under the protection of Providence, he might place the fullest reliance on the wisdom and firmness of his parliament, on the tried valor of his forces by sea and land, and on the zeal, public spirit, and resources of his kingdoms, for vigorous and effectual support in the prosecution of a contest, which it did not depend on His Majesty to terminate, and which involved in it the security and permanent interests of this country and of Europe."

The House divided on an amendment moved by Mr. Fox, censuring the conduct of ministers in the negotiation:

For the amendment 37

Against it 212

The address was then agreed to.

In less than six months, however, another effort was made to effect a reconciliation with France, and lord MALMESBURY was sent to Lisle to treat with French commissioners for that purpose; but with as little success as before. In the King's speech at the meeting of parliament on the 2d of November 1797, the rupture of the negotiation was solely ascribed to "the evasive conduct, the unwarrantable pretensions, and the inordinate ambition of those with whom we had to contend; and above all to their inveterate animosity against these kingdoms."

The debate on the address in the House of Commons was not very interesting, the benches of opposition being in a manner deserted, Mr. Fox and almost all his friends having withdrawn, from a determination, since their counsel was rejected, not to persist in a fatiguing, incessant, and fruitless contest. But the marquis of LANS-DOWN distinguished himself in the House of Lords by the following very able and animated speech :

“ MY LORDS,

“ I do not rise to offer my feeble opposition to the address that has been proposed. I know how illusory and how vain it would be for me to flatter myself with the presumption that any thing which I can offer would avail in this most perilous and awful moment ! When I see the House deserted by all those noble Peers whose just influence is supported by great ability and by powerful eloquence, I cannot hope that any thing coming from abilities like mine can have weight upon you ; but, my lords, however weak my voice, however feeble my talents, I conceive it to be my duty to exert them in the way which I think may the best conduce to the object which I have in view, that of arresting you in a career that leads to death. In the short interval between life and death, brought as we are to the brink of that most dreadful precipice which, noble lords have so justly deplored, I yet think it right, single as I am, to raise my warning voice, and to save you if possible from the abyss. The absence of the noble lords, though it has not surprized me, afflicts my heart : I am not surprized, my lords, because I do not know whether it is not even a wise, a salutary, and a patriotic measure ; far be it from me, to arraign them, it is a measure upon which I have often contemplated myself with seriousness, and which I have more than once thought of adopting. For what, my lords, avails it, for a few men, unsupported by public opinion, to spend their breath here against a system which is not

to be assailed by wisdom, nor moved by patriotism ; which reposes itself on other bases than discussion, experience, and truth? I have, no doubt, therefore, but that these noble persons have declined their attendance upon considerations, strong, and weighty; upon principles of conscience and rectitude ; and that their absence may do more to awaken you to seriousness and to reflection, than all they could have done by fine harangues and by declamation, however lofty, and however impressive. My lords, if I come down thus single, it is not from any motive of self conceit ; it is not, I repeat it, because I think that any thing I have to say will work upon your minds, but because I think the times themselves demand from every man exertion in every way in which it is possible ; demand from yourselves the surrender of those prejudices which have hitherto made you deaf to the danger that surrounds you, and demand from all parties the forgetfulness of what is past, that we may now come with serious minds to contemplate the peril of our situation. It is this, my lords, that induces me yet to trouble you with my faint, perhaps my unavailing, voice. The declaration, and what a declaration ! has made a most serious impression upon me ; unaccompanied as it is with the documents. I read it with a perfect confidence in the main facts which it states. If one quarter of those facts be true, and that they are I have not the slightest inclination to disbelieve, what do they prove ? That the French Directory have no intention to make peace with you : not merely that they have no intention to make peace with you, but they are alienised and hostile to the government of this country ? My lords, this is a most serious and important matter, for then comes the great question, what are we to do in such a predicament ? The noble earl says *continue the war !* I ask you, how are you to continue it ? I leave all that has been said about Geneva, and Genoa, and the other states who have

suffered from the conduct of France, to men better acquainted with the circumstances. We have nothing to do with these details. Our case is not parallel. Great Britain is not to be put on a footing with the petty states which the drunkenness of the French Revolution has disturbed, and we ought not to be diverted from the contemplation of our own ease by such references. I leave them along with all the books and speeches of prediction about the impossibility of the French continuing their systems, which have so long and so fatally deluded your lordships. We are come now to that point, when we are doomed to act by ourselves, and I need not tell your lordships, that through the whole of this business it has been the invariable principle of those who have carried on the war, that we could not make any effectual impression on France without a continental ally. If this be true, what shall we now do when the French have made a Jacobin of the Emperor? Can we go on without an ally for any purpose of offence? We cannot hope to recover the King of Prussia as an ally: there is little chance of rekindling in his breast the flame of romance that has now burned in us for five years; he long ago had wisdom to quit the scene, and now we find that even the Emperor is withdrawn. I hope, however, that we shall find him a man of honor in his engagements, and that the money which was advanced in this country, which our ministers have constantly declared was not a subsidy, but a solemn loan, will be paid with punctuality and honor. The surmises that I have heard, I must therefore disregard. But, my lords, what I in particular desire to press upon your consideration is, that you are now called upon to persevere in the contest, without the means which have so frequently been stated as essential to its success. It is for your lordships to stop and inquire with what wisdom you are now to open this new career. The noble lord says, that our means are flourishing in consequence of our increased

trade. Are they so? Is the noble lord furnished with authentic documents of this fact? I shall really be rejoiced to hear that this lofty assertion, which I see also makes a part of the speech, can be proved; I have not had opportunity to see any papers that can satisfy me on the subject. What I have seen are directly the reverse. The papers that I have seen respecting the state of the trade with Portugal, and the wire trade, give me proofs of a most lamentable decay; it is not merely that they are not productive, which is a loose and unqualified expression, but they are extremely deficient. It is not then, because our sailors have conquered, and because we have most gloriously demonstrated to all the world the character of our natural strength, that therefore we are provided with the means of carrying on an offensive war against France without a continental ally. Our sailors indeed have maintained the glory of our maritime empire; they have shewn the true *vis animæ* of the British marine, which like the natural strength of a youth, in a casual sickness, resists all the blunders of his physicians; but great and glorious as our naval exploits have been, what can they do for us in such a contest? They make us masters of the sea, indeed, but where shall we land? We have the seas of Europe, and France has its ports? It is necessary to the circuit of commerce, that not merely the seas should be open, but the markets. What then is our relative situation? We have ships that traverse and command the ocean; the French have armies that traverse and command the shores. From Paris to Hamburgh on the one side, from Paris to Lisbon on the other, they occupy, and will occupy, every point of contact with the main land of Europe. A DUNCAN and a St. VINCENT may sweep them from the seas, and achieve for their country and their own names immortal honor; but what will all this avail us towards offensive war? Are we to have new revolutions; are we to look to new schemes of

descent; are we so little chastised in the school of adversity as yet to cherish the hopes of invasion of France? How are we to do it? Is it by balloons? I have heard of no recent invention which is honored with the approbation of the war office for the conquest of France. But, my lords, do we yet talk of a counter-revolution after all the experience that we have had? Are we yet weak enough to cherish this puerile expectation? If you are, I would refer your lordships to a most able pamphlet written by a late comptroller-general of France. The authority of this writer, speaking contrary to his wishes, ought to have weight. He states admirably well the situation into which you have driven France, and he exposes and ridicules the nonsense with which we have been so long duped and deluded about their inability to continue the struggle. All the nonsense about *assignats* and *mandates*, with which my ears have been stunned in this house, for I profess to God, my lords, that I have frequently gone from this house so stunned and dumb-founded that I have not been able to return to my repose. But, Monsieur DE CALONE says, with truth, that all our driving produced the contrary effect to what we intended; that it is quite ridiculous to talk about the property of a nation where all its property is afloat. Its very paper, which we idly looked up to as the pregnant source of its ruin, was not merely a genuine source for the time that it lasted, but by our attacks upon it became the principle of salvation to France. It worked out its own cure; and France from having more paper than all the world put together, has now less than this country. Such is the declaration of this ingenious man, and such is his confession of former error. My lords, I am not come here to give my opinion in the spirit of a Frenchman! I am no Frenchman! I am no *Jacobin*! But in this most dreadful crisis, If I could suggest any means that might tend to correct the folly of our system, and to check the fatality of our career; I feel it my duty

to do so. I profess to God, I know but one means, on chance for safety. I see but one powerful resource left to the nation, *and it is a change of ministers*. I yet have confidence that this resource will be tried. His Majesty has now reigned over us thirty-seven years; no man has a greater knowledge of the character of the people of England than His Majesty. In the chief magistrate of such a government as ours, it is not great talents which are required so much as that plain integrity, and humane attention to the good of his people, which rejects all considerations of a personal kind, and seeks only for their happiness and safety. In this view, I cannot despair of the public weal, since if His Majesty will enter into the serious inquiry of the most likely means to restore to his kingdoms the blessings of peace, he must see, and every honest man whom he consults will tell him, that a change of his ministers is the most likely means of accomplishing that desirable object. For, let us suppose how the Directory of France must argue with respect to the present ministers of England. It is a principle with me, and I know that it is fit and prudent for all men to do the same, whenever I have a dispute to settle with a person, I endeavour to put myself into his situation, and to argue the case as it is likely that he will argue it. By this means I am likely to correct my own views of the subject, to subdue my own passions, and to discuss the question with fairness and impartiality. In this manner let us suppose what must be the train of reasoning in the mind of the Directory of France. Must they not speak in something like this strain? We have succeeded in convincing all the powers on the continent of Europe of the folly of the crusade they undertook against us; we have added more to the empire of France than ever the mind of cardinal RICHELIEU conceived; we have magnified the power of our country upon the basis which gave occasion to the war; we are young in the enjoyment of our liberties;

and all the means of a youthful government are in our hands ; but what remains ? One power only under hot-headed councils persists in its attack upon us, and sends forth declarations against us, charging us with every species of atrocity, and denouncing us to all the world as the authors of the war that has so long deluged it in blood. We, who only wanted liberty, have conquered the powers who wanted plunder, and have aggrandized ourselves at the expense of our assailants. One only of the confederacy continues obstinately bent on our ruin, and though she has failed in stirring up others against us, still rails at our government in paper declarations. And this power that thus perseveres against us, is brought by this very obstinacy to embarrassments which it can neither palliate nor conceal. It stands on a tottering base. The very shadow of a descent upon Ireland convulsed its bank, and at the very moment that it threatens to pour forth its vengeance upon us, it is ready to sink under the efforts it has already made. What then, after having freed ourselves from those powers at our door, who could really attack us, shall we yield to this insulated foe that has no armies with which it can wound us ? Are we tamely to submit to their repeated imputations, and are their menaces of starvation and extermination to disturb our march ? They mean our overthrow, and this is the true motive of their conduct. Even in asking for peace they mean hostility. They seek only for a peace that shall be an armistice, in which they are to take breath, and attack us to more advantage again. No, they are insincere ! They are our only enemy, and the present is the moment for us to save France from their designs. It is possible, my lords, that a member of the directory may indulge himself in language so vehement as this, and which though it cannot be justified, has unfortunately too much truth on its side. If His Majesty should converse with any plain, sensible, and honest men upon the subject, what

must be their advice? That to say no worse, his servants had been hot-headed and intemperate; that their resolutions had been unsteady, their conduct equivocal, their measures contradictory, their cause without principle, their proceedings without plan; that they had never been able to satisfy the thinking part of the nation as to the wisdom, the necessity, or the justice of the war; nor had they been able to satisfy even those who approved of the motive of the war, with the vigor, the prudence, or the economy of its conduct; they would say that the French Directory had too much reason for their suspicions of our sincerity, even in our professions of peace. In all the instances where commissioners had been appointed to negotiate, a dark, underhand game was played, which contradicted the public profession of the British cabinet. Thus when a commissioner was sent to Switzerland, and that Mr. WICKHAM opened a correspondence with the French, they discovered that it was only for the purpose of negotiating a loan. Again, when my lord MALMESBURY was sent to Paris, they discovered that while we were thus making professions of peace at Paris, we were negotiating a hostile treaty with Russia; and last of all, our negotiation at Lisle was accompanied by that counter-revolutionary insurrection in the interior of France, which produced the convulsion of the 4th of September, and in which they affect to say, they discovered the insidious hand of the English minister. My lords, I do not presume to speak from any personal knowledge on this subject; but, he must be wilfully blind who does not see that the French charge our ministers with the fact, and that our declaration is studiously shy of disproving the charge. Yet you cannot avoid observing that up to the 4th of September, the negotiation continued; but, on the bursting of that volcano, the conferences broke up. What then would an honest adviser of His Majesty say? but, that ministers who had thus conducted themselves, and who

had thus exasperated the enemy, were less likely than other men to procure peace for the country. They would advise him at least to try the expedient, they would deprive the enemy of the advantage which they now possess, of asserting with a colour of probability, that the war is continued only because the ministers of His Britannic Majesty are insidious and insincere.

“ If I am asked upon what line and basis a peace ought to be concluded, I can only say, that provided it is concluded in the spirit of peace, I would not be very anxious to specify the conditions. I do not think that mere colonies, either East Indian or West Indian, a sufficient argument for the continuance of war, not even Trincomale itself. As to our West India settlements, the events that have recently happened, have materially changed our policy with regard to them. When we enjoyed all their consumption, it was very different; but now that it is, in a great measure, transferred to America, and when the enlightened spirit of humanity has done so much towards the emancipation of the negro slaves, and that the French Revolution has introduced the principles of insubordination into those islands, I would not contend for a single day about any object in the West Indies; the value of those colonies is very much lessened, indeed, to England. As to the Cape of Good Hope, about which so many lofty expectations were formed, on that also our ideas are corrected; the whole is found to be a dream. I have reason to know, that the men who were the most ardent in their expectations about the Cape, are now convinced that it would be not only useless but inconvenient to keep it. The whole, then, is reduced to Trincomale; and though I own that Trincomale is of enormous value to the defence of our East Indian Empire, and that it is a thing which we ought to negotiate for, and to get, if we can; it surely is not worth the continuance of a war. We gained our empire in the East without Trincomale;

we have taken Trincomale before now, and given it up : and I am not for incurring another campaign that will cost us thirty millions, for the sake of this settlement. This is my opinion, and I throw it forth without hesitation. Let us come to our senses ; our system ought to be purely defensive ; a defensive war is not a great evil to this country, compared with that which we have been doomed to endure. But let us above all regain the opinion of Europe ; we have lost it by our intemperance, our pride, and our rapacity. Let us proclaim freedom to neutral nations ; we shall be forced to do it, and that with an ill grace ; the present is the moment favorable to conciliation. If thus we recognize the commercial freedom of the world, we shall be the first to profit from the grand and generous system. Our means for a defensive system are, indeed, large ; these our nautical skill, and our nautical capital, if I may be allowed the phrase, would maintain to us the true sovereignty of the seas, for it would secure to us the empire of its commerce. To this I would suggest the important duty of a thorough examination of our expenses through all their details, and of our abuses through all their gradations ; there are other things which must also enter into this plan, and which will naturally suggest themselves to every mind. We have not merely Europe to conciliate, we have also to conciliate at home : we must satisfy the minds of the people. I need not tell you, my lords, that parts of this empire are convulsed to the heart ; you will naturally feel that. I turn my eye to the state of Ireland, from which all public information is barred ; but you must not shut your minds against it, it presses too forcibly upon you for resistance. I have seen letters from a noble person worthy the highest consideration, which give this emphatical description of the present state of Ireland.—‘ Ireland is quiet indeed ; but it is the quiet which reigns on board of a tender under the management of a press gang.’ I have

seen also a letter in an evening print, '*the Courier*,' which loudly calls upon your lordships' attention. It gives such a description of the horrors that reign in Ireland, as, if true, ought instantly to call for redress. I am convinced that if this subject is not immediately taken up, that we shall have but one alternative, a federal union, or a separation. My lords, the case is imminent. I speak as no party man on the subject ; secure to me my property and my quiet.—The people who are to be governed have a right to both ; and I see no means of restoring the people to the security of property, and the satisfaction of repose, but by making peace with that mighty people, who, to the enthusiasm of liberty, have all the resources of a nation yet before them. They are not exhausted as we are ; they have not run through all the classes of taxation ; the combat is unequal, and I dread the event. Peace is necessary to our deliverance, by that we may lessen our expenses, not, as it is vainly held out in the speech ; for so long as the war lasts the enemy is the arbiter of your expense—but by a well constructed and a solid peace, you may pave the way for the amelioration of your internal state. You may satisfy the people, that their representation is substantial, and efficacious to its purpose, not by giving to them the bubble of universal suffrage, a thing which no man that uses the term has ever been able justly to define, much less to reconcile with common sense and practice, but to satisfy them by gradual reforms growing out of the constitution itself. I say gradual reforms, for God forbid that any other but gradual reform should ever be countenanced in England. My lords, I have done. I had some intentions of putting some words into the shape of an amendment, but I knew it was useless. I see no good that can be obtained in that way. I have now, for forty years, seen the fate of them in the two Houses of Parliament. I look to another quarter for our remedy. We have a Prince of experience on the throne ;—he has

friends who are capable of giving him sound and serious advice. It is, perhaps, come to the critical minute when acting on their counsel, he may yet rescue us from the fate that impends over our heads.—May God grant that we shall still owe to his paternal care the national safety.”

No farther attempt at negotiation was made during Mr. PITT's continuance in office ; but before we come to report the defence of the peace concluded by his successor, it may be proper to notice some other important events which took place in the mean time.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE TROUBLES IN IRELAND, AND THE FINAL UNION
OF THAT COUNTRY WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

AT a time when the discontents in Ireland continued daily to increase, and to create the most serious alarm, Mr. Fox, on the 23d of March 1797, moved an address to the King on the subject, which he enforced by the following arguments:

“ The business, Sir, which I am about to bring before the House, is one not only of great importance in its nature, but of great urgency in point of time. It is not my wish to go at length into all the causes that have produced the uneasiness that exists in Ireland, and which has created a similar uneasiness here ; I do think it necessary to recur to a period somewhat distant from the present, in order to enable the House to form an accurate opinion upon the subject, and to induce them to accede to the motion which it is my intention to submit to them. Sir, in the year 1782, very great discontents existed in Ireland, and it appeared to me to be indispensably necessary, that every thing should be done, on the part of the government, to appease and allay them. With this view I proposed the recognition of the complete independence of Ireland. It is not now of importance to consider, whether that recognition was a boon or a right. It is not necessary for me to discuss whether it was a right demanded by justice, or a boon required by policy. But having been the person who proposed that act, I consider myself bound to follow up the principle of it, which was to make Ireland a free and independent country ; and above all, to

adopt such measures as are calculated to admit her to the enjoyment of all the advantages of that independence, and to restore that cordial affection between the two countries, so eminently requisite to the preservation and prosperity of both. To those who consider the recognition as a right, and still more to those who view it as a boon, it may seem not a little extraordinary, after a conduct so just and liberal on the part of this country, that, from the period of 1782, there have been growing scenes of dissatisfaction and discontent in that country, and that at this moment Ireland is in a condition at which no man can look without the deepest alarm. In my opinion, therefore, the parliament of Great Britain is naturally called upon to inquire, how it has happened that those concessions have not produced all the salutary consequences that might have been expected from them; and it is on that account that I think it the duty of this House, and my own duty in particular, to direct the attention of the British Legislature to the present state of the sister kingdom. Sir, without entering into particulars, no man will deny that the situation of Ireland, at the present moment, is one of great peril and danger. It appears by late accounts that we are commencing a system of rigor, occasioned by what some consider as discontents, and others the disaffection that at present subsists among the people; —to that situation it becomes us to advert, and by wise councils to obviate the impending evils, and to provide such remedies as the circumstances of the case may require. In such an important situation, we ought to approach the Throne with that advice which may be calculated to avert the dangers which threaten, and to remedy the distractions which prevail. It is sufficient for this purpose to shew that Ireland is in a state of disturbance and discontent, and it is material to inquire how this situation of things has been occasioned. Although a variety of circumstances have combined to produce this state,

there are two or three leading points to which I propose chiefly to direct the attention of the House, and into which they ought seriously to inquire. These are, how far, in consequence of the concessions which have been made to Ireland, she has in fact and in substance, enjoyed the advantages of an independent legislature; and whether, in that form of a free constitution which they obtained, the people possess that political weight to which they are intitled; and whether their just voice and influence have been promoted by the alteration which was effected? Other points there may be nearly, perhaps, as important: but these certainly are objects of most essential consideration. In viewing the inhabitants of Ireland, we find that a very great proportion, about five-sixths, as it has generally been calculated, are Roman Catholics. It is true that considerable concessions, had been made in their favor, and several of the grievances under which they laboured have apparently been removed. The question, however, is, whether, in point of fact, these concessions have tended to remove dissatisfaction, and to conciliate attachment? If, upon inquiry, it shall appear that the mode in which these concessions were made, and the acts of the executive power with which they were accompanied, have produced the severest persecutions of a political nature, those who do not mistake paper regulations and theoretical privileges for practical government, will be convinced that, in fact and in substance, the grounds of discontent of the Roman Catholics have not been redressed, and that, in point of right and real possession, they have been kept in a situation worse than that in which they had previously stood. These are the principal points which the inquiry must embrace; but there are others unconnected with the state of the Catholics. The inhabitants of the northern part of Ireland are by some considered in a less favorable light, and their grounds of complaint are heard with a less favorable ear.

The discontents of no class of men whatever ought to be viewed with that repugnance which precludes an impartial examination ; and I cannot much admire the wisdom of those by whom such prejudices are adopted as rules of conduct. The discontents of the inhabitants of the northern parts of Ireland arise from two causes : one of them is the temporary pressure of a war, in which they were involved, without interest in the contest, and the distresses which the calamities with which it has been attended have entailed upon their trade and commerce : the other has been the abuses which they conceived to exist in the constitution by which they are governed. The constitution of Ireland, they complain, does not resemble that of Great Britain ; they have not a legislature by which the people are even virtually represented ; and as to political liberty, they enjoy as small a portion of it as those who live under monarchies, in which the principles of freedom have never been introduced. As to the first point, the efficacy of the recognition in 1782, an opinion prevails in Ireland, that whatever may have been the intention with which that measure was adopted, it has not, in fact, or in substance, produced a free and independent legislature, but that the advantages which the form of a free constitution seemed to promise, have been counteracted by the influence of the Executive Government and of the British Cabinet. It would be fortunate if this were merely the language of discontent ; it would be fortunate if this were an opinion not supported by that unequivocal confirmation it has derived from the measures of government ; it would be fortunate if the system which has been uniformly acted upon did not give to the complaint so much countenance and validity. Without going into particular details, it is impossible not to mention a few of the most striking events which establish its truth. At the time of the unfortunate events of His Majesty's indisposition, the legislature of Ireland took a very decid-

ed part ; the parliament of Ireland did censure the Lord Lieutenant for the conduct he had pursued, and expressed a decided opinion on the state of public affairs at that period. Immediately after this, however, and during the administration of the same Lord Lieutenant, a great accession of influence was gained by the Crown, and the Parliament was prevailed upon to unsay all they had said, and to retract every opinion they had given. These are matters so notorious, that they must be seen through by all who exercise their faculties, and the conclusion which they press must be felt by all but those who will not open their eyes to discern the substance through the form. It is even matter of notoriety too, that a regular system was then devised for enslaving Ireland. A person of high consideration was known to say, that 500,000*l.* had been expended to quell an opposition in Ireland, and that as much more must be expended to bring the legislature of that country to a proper temper. This systematic plan of corruption upon principle, was followed up by a suitable system of measures. It was asserted, and offered to be proved in the Irish parliament, by men of the first character, and the highest talents, and when I mention the name of Mr. GRATTAN, I need add nothing more, that it had been the system of Government by the sale of peerages, to raise a purse to purchase the representation, or rather the misrepresentation of the people of Ireland. The charge was brought by men of as great abilities, of as unimpeached honor, of as high public character and private virtue, as ever appeared either in that country or in this, by men too who feel as sincere an attachment to Great Britain, who cherish the connection which subsists between the two kingdoms, and who would be as much alarmed as any men whatever at any circumstances which might threaten to involve a separation. It was offered to be proved, that one half, or even a majority of the House of Commons, were creatures of the Crown. The man-

ner in which these events were considered at the time in Ireland was this: "You have granted us," said the people, "an independent legislature, independent certainly of your parliament, but dependent upon your executive government." The concession, therefore, they viewed not as a blessing, but as a mockery and an insult. Another proof of this substantial dependence upon the executive government was evinced in the manner in which the demands of the Catholics had, at different times, been treated. Their first petition merely prayed for a remedy to some of the most oppressive grievances under which they laboured, and in the humblest stile solicited indulgence and concession. An immense majority of the House of Commons were not content with refusing the desire of the petition, but they resolved to fix upon it a mark of particular insult, by voting its rejection. In this haughty and insulting vote every member under the influence of Government concurred. The very next session, however, when the war was begun, and when a more conciliatory conduct was deemed prudent, a petition, comprehending claims much more extensive, obtained a reception very different from their former modest pretensions. The Crown recommended the claim, and the same ministers who had caused it to be indignantly rejected, now carried the vote by which pretensions far more important were sanctioned. Of this opposite conduct which the Executive Government thus displayed, I most certainly approve the latter part; but it is not as deserving approbation that I now insist upon it, but I mention it to shew that it is not to representation of a factious declaimer, that it is not mere cant and nonsense to assert that the independence of the Irish legislature is a delusion, and that their freedom vanishes before the breath of the minister. How, in fact, can the people of Ireland entertain a different opinion, when they see the indecent manner in which Government have exhibited the parlia-

ment as their creatures? When Earl Fitzwilliam went to Ireland in the capacity of Lord Lieutenant, it was understood that he left London with the approbation of ministers, in favour of the complete emancipation of the Catholics; and though no such vote ever passed the legislature, no doubt was entertained that the measure was to take effect, and that it would have experienced the most complete support from parliament. However I differ with my noble friend on his system of politics, it cannot be denied that he was the most popular Lord Lieutenant with all ranks of men, that had ever been sent to govern Ireland; but after the hopes that had been raised, after the known preparation of parliament to vote complete emancipation to the Catholics, he is suddenly dismissed, the whole system is reversed, and the question which a few weeks before would have been carried with unanimity, is rejected by a vast majority. What was this but the most insulking display of the dependence of the Irish legislature? Was it not a proof beyond a thousand demonstrations, that the measure of 1782 had been rendered completely inefficacious, that, in fact, Ireland had gained nothing—that they were placed in a state of degradation beyond any former period? The effects of this persevering and avowed system of duplicity might, indeed, be different, according to the character and situation of those on whom it operated. The lower classes of the Roman Catholics, unfortunately not more enlightened, not better informed, nor, perhaps, so well as the peasantry in other countries, might be unable to speculate upon particular circumstances, and to reason upon events, might yet feel its effects. The inhabitants of the northern parts, as well informed, as intelligent, as enlightened as the middling classes in Great Britain, or any other country, would view the system with a more discriminating glance; they would be able to combine the disposition which they saw manifested with the constitu-

tional grievances under which they laboured, and it would at once heighten their sense of abuses, and their desire of reform ; but even the concessions which were extended to the Catholics, were conducted upon a plan which seemed studiously intended by Government to damp their joy of their success. Before I proceed, I must here beg leave pointedly to express my abhorrence of the maxim *divide et impera*, and especially that by such a truly diabolical maxim the government of Ireland should be regulated : on the contrary, I am convinced, that in order to render Ireland happy in itself, and useful in its connection with this country, every idea of ruling by division ought to be relinquished, and that the object of Government should be to effect a complete union of all ranks of men. Disapproving, as I do most heartily, the maxim I have mentioned, I cannot help being surprized that a Government so little disposed to act upon the principles of justice, or of liberty, had acted as if it had been their aim to undo every part. So little was it the object to inspire the Catholics with gratitude for what had been conceded, that opinions were given without concealment, which left little room for exultation in what had been obtained. It was usual for men of consideration in Ireland to talk as if what had been done was an act of necessity, which, on a fit occasion, would be recalled ; hostile suspicions were insinuated, not merely against the lower orders of Catholics, whom it seemed to be the policy of Government, weakly and wickedly to divide from the higher rank, but against men of the first respectability, of considerable property and unimpeached character, and undoubted loyalty ; numbers were taken up under charges of high treason ; and when acquitted, it appeared that no ground of suspicion could ever have been entertained against them. What could be the objects of such proceedings but to convince the Catholics that the concessions in their favour were extorted, that the hostile mind

still existed, and that they were still marked out as the victims of the most cruel proscriptions and oppression? Private animosities too arose, and produced those different classes of disturbers of the public peace about which so much has been said. The remedies applied tended to foment the evil. The authority of the laws was superseded. Those against whom convictions, it was thought, could be procured, were taken up; and those whom it would have been impossible to convict, were transported in great numbers, without the ceremony of a trial, or the form of conviction. To enable the government to pursue these violent measures, the insurrection act was passed. Those who delight in violent measures, and there are many in these times who even avow them as their favorite policy, were ravished to think how easily quiet was restored by this remedy, and rejoiced in the effect of their application. But the lapse of a very short time has shewn them the consequence of their conduct, and the miserable fallacy of their reasonings. Let them now look to the operation of violent measures, and reap the harvest of the seeds which then were sown. Other laws nearly as objectionable as the insurrection law were also adopted; and to one of these I must particularly call the attention of the House, in order to shew the inefficacy of violent remedies to support a system against the will of the people. It was thought a point of the first necessity to prevent the people who were the objects of jealousy, from procuring arms. Considering the strength which the government of Ireland possessed, it might have been supposed, that none could have obtained arms but those who were armed by the license or command of the Executive Power. Such, however, has been considered the extent of the danger, that a rigour beyond any former measure has been employed in disarming the people. From one violent measure to another, the exercise of one inordinate authority has produced the demand for in-

creased powers, while every remedy that has been applied has served only to augment the danger. Thus every one of their schemes has directly led to the very effect against which they wished to guard, and such is considered to be the danger of the people having arms in their power, that, to disarm them, is again thought an object of the first necessity, to be accomplished by any means.

I know there are persons in the country who suppose that the prejudices of the Roman Catholics and the Dissenters will prevent them from forming an union; but how is this effect likely to be prevented, when you are declaring every day so many districts out of the king's peace, and in a state of disturbance; and instead of conciliating the minds of the Catholics, are telling them that they have nothing more to expect. And now, Sir, a few words upon the grievances of the Catholics and Dissenters. I know an opinion has gone forth, that the Catholics have now no substantial grievances to complain of; that the Presbyterians have still less. It is said that the Catholics have had ceded to them all the privileges of the most importance; that they can vote for members of parliament, and that they are not distinguished from the Protestants but by being excluded from the high offices of state, and from being members of parliament. If this were all, I should still say that they have a right to all the privileges possessed by the Protestants. Upon what principle ought they to be excluded? On what grounds of justice? Sir, upon no grounds of justice; the only reason, therefore, must be a reason of policy, which is a sufficient proof of a hostile mind against them; but let us consider it in other points of view. Is it nothing to have no share in the government, and to be excluded from the higher offices of the state? But it is invidiously objected by the Government, that to the Catholics it is not civil liberty which they wish, but it is power and emolument

which they pursue. To this I would answer for the Catholics, yes: nor is it any discredit that they should be actuated by such desire. I would say, that civil liberty can have no security without political power. To ask civil liberty without political power, would be to act like weak men, and to ask the possession of a right for the enjoyment of which they could have no security. I know that distinctions have been made between civil and political liberty, and I admit that it is possible for whole classes, whole casts and descriptions of men to enjoy the one without possessing the other. Still, however, I assert, that it can be only by sufferance. I admit, that civil liberty is of a higher kind; but this I contend, that political power is the only security for the enjoyment of the other. The Catholics may justly say, therefore, that it is not this or that concession that will satisfy us, but give us that which alone can give us security for its continuance. It is objected also that the Catholics are not merely ambitious of power, but actuated by views of private emolument. But if this were true, is it improper that the Catholics, contributing so largely to the support of Government, should be desirous to share the emolument which it bestows, as a compensation for what they sacrifice? The compensation, indeed, is trifling: but still, should they in point of right be excluded from their proportion? Yet, how strongly will their claim be felt, when it is considered who are the disputants? Are the Catholics to be told by a few monopolizing politicians, who engross all places, all reversions, all emoluments, all patronages. "Oh, you base Catholics, you think of nothing but your private emolument. You perverse generation, who have already been permitted to vote for members of parliament, are you so base as to urge the disgraceful demand of a share in personal emoluments?" The Catholics are men, and are to be governed. The expense of maintaining all governments must be consider-

able, and that of Ireland is certainly not a model of economy. Of the emoluments arising out of the establishments of government, the Catholics have a just right to participate; and for a small and interested minority to imagine that they can monopolize all these advantages to themselves, is a pretension which will not be admitted: mankind are not to be treated in this manner, and it is not now a-days that such claims will pass current in the world. The loyalty and activity of the Catholics upon the late attempted invasion, is now the theme of the highest panegyric; but it is empty, unavailing praise: *laudatur et alget* is the situation of the Catholic loyalty. The qualities which are so much extolled, ought to be rewarded by conferring upon their possessors those just claims which are yet denied them, the total abolition of all distinction: to remove every mark by which religious differences could be known, is a condition which a minority, one should think, would be glad to accept with a joy bordering on gratitude. I know that the meaning of the word Protestant is much limited in its signification by some, and that the Presbyterian Dissenters do not receive even the name of Protestants; still, however, I am desirous to retain the word, as I do not exactly coincide with the zealous distinction of those to whom I allude. What have the Protestant Dissenters to complain of? It is said, they may serve in parliament; and as the Test act, which here has been held so necessary to the security of the church and the defence of the monarchy, is no longer thought requisite, they may hold offices without any obstacle or difficulty. Before I proceed to consider the situation of the Protestants, there is one point relative to the Catholics which I ought to explain; it has been said that the Catholics are entitled to vote for members of parliament, and the fallacy of this boasted privilege ought to be exposed; except in the counties, the representation of Ireland was in what is here known by the name of Close

Corporations. The animosities which formerly subsisted are anxiously kept up by the Executive Government, and they favour the determination to exclude the Catholics from the corporations, so that their privilege is thus almost entirely evaded. They thus confer in theory a power, which they are careful to defeat in practice. Those who esteem this privilege, then, must be very fond of theories upon paper, and very unconcerned about their practical effect; yet however good theorists they may be upon such principles, they are not likely to act in such a manner as to afford much satisfaction, or produce much benefit to mankind. The Presbyterians consider their grievances to consist in the abuses of the government, which they have not means to remedy. They wish for the substantial blessings of the English constitution; they wish for the political principles on which that constitution is founded. Whoever imagines that a practical resemblance existed between the government of Ireland and the English constitution, would find that the Irish government is a mirror in which the abuses of this constitution are strongly reflected. I will not speak of the abuses of which we have been used to complain, but if I were desirous to reconcile any one to the abuses of the British constitution, it would be by a comparison with those of Ireland. Whatever may have been thought of the plans of parliamentary reform which have been agitated here, still it was always admitted that the House of Commons should be at least a virtual representation of the people. It certainly was stating the point of virtual representation very high when it was asserted in this House, that though all the representatives of England were chosen by the county of Middlesex, it would be no reason for reform, so long as such a parliament discharged its duty as a parliament. But are the people of Ireland unreasonable when they complain that they have not the advantage even of virtual representation? when they complain that the jobbing system of influence and

patronage, for purposes of personal advantage, is an abuse that totally destroys the spirit of their form of government, and a practical nuisance which cannot be endured? To suppose that a large, industrious, active, and intelligent body of men can be governed against the principles they have imbibed, and the prejudices by which they are guided, is an idea which history and human nature prove to be absurd. What is the situation of affairs with respect to Ireland? You have raised enormous burdens both in England and in Ireland. You have produced great discontents, and you are reduced to such a point that you must take a decided part. In fact, we now are precisely at the point in which we stood in 1774 with America; and the question is, whether we are to attempt to retain Ireland by force, instead of endeavouring to gain by concessions, and to conciliate by conferring the full and substantial blessings of a free constitution? The circumstances in some respects are different, and it may be discovered that the distance of America, and its population, extended over an immense tract of country, were disadvantages peculiar to that contest. I remember, however, that the extent of the territory of America was stated as an advantage, as it would prevent sudden collections of people. So favorable were circumstances supposed to be, that an officer boasted that with a single company of grenadiers, or a single regiment, I do not remember which, he would march from one end of America to the other; and though he had been able to realize his boast, I know not what mighty advantage it could have produced. I well remember that at that period to which I allude, the expression of the American war, which I was the first in the House to use, was treated with the utmost ridicule; and to call some riots at Boston by the appellation of a war, was considered as a great absurdity. Some may treat the idea of a war with Ireland with the same contempt and ridicule; and I sincere-

ly hope that experience will not decide so triumphantly in my favour as on the former occasion. Whenever I see a government desirous to decide by force against the will of the majority, in these circumstances I see the danger of civil war. There is this difference now in our situation, that the state of our finances may deter us from encountering such hazardous enterprizes. In the other case we were wealthy and prosperous. *Stultitiam patiuntur opes* might then be said of our situation; but now the critical state of our affairs, and the embarrassed condition of our finances, forbade that prodigality of resource, and similar dangers of experiment. In circumstances like the present, I believe no man who was in His Majesty's councils at the beginning of the American war, would have been mad enough to have embarked in the contest. I hope and trust that the discontents which threaten the separation of Ireland, will be dissipated without the necessity of a war. But now the extremity of rigor has been tried, the severity of despotism has been let loose, and the government is driven to that state when the laws are not to be put in execution, but to be superseded. Ireland is precisely in that state which a person well acquainted with the subject defined to be despotism, "where the executive power is every thing, and the rights of the people nothing." At the beginning of the American contest, the province of Massachusetts's Bay was disarmed; but I do not think that if this province had been left armed, the separation of the American colonies would have been accelerated. The people of Ireland are now in that state when if they should choose to resist, a contest must ensue, the issue of which must be doubtful. In the commencement of the American war, I had made such an observation of the disposition of the regular governments of Europe, that I was convinced that France would aid America. In the present there can be no room for doubt that the French would make it a chief

point of their policy to give assistance to the insurgents. But suppose you were to succeed in disarming the whole of the north of Ireland, you must keep them in subjection by force. If you do not allay their discontents, there is no way but force to keep them in obedience. Can you convince them by the musquet that their principles are false? Can you prove to them by the bayonet that their pretensions are unjust? Can you demonstrate to them by martial law that they enjoy the blessings of a free constitution? No: it is said, but they may be deterred from the prosecution of the objects which you have determined to refuse. But on what history is this founded?—on the history of Ireland itself? No; for the history of Ireland proves that, though repeatedly subdued, it could not be kept in awe by force; and the late examples will prove the effect which severity may be expected to produce. The character of the people who inhabit the north of Ireland has been severely stigmatized. For my own part, it is not my habit to admit a fixed dislike against any bodies of men, nor do I see any thing in these to justify such a dislike. But it is said these men are of the old leaven. They are, indeed of the old leaven that rescued the country from the tyranny of CHARLES the first, and JAMES the second; they are of that leaven which asserted and defended the principles of liberty; they are of that leaven which fermented, when kneaded together, the freedom of the British constitution. If these principles were carried to excess, it is an excess to which I am more partial than to the opposite extreme. The opposition they have suffered is some apology. I am told that the mode now adopted is this—to declare a country out of the king's peace, it is necessary that there should be a certificate from the magistrates. Many of the magistrates are not natives of Ireland, or resident there, but Englishmen and officers of the Fencible corps. Are the people to be told that these magistrates are acting

only in a civil capacity? But have they not been provoked to violence? Several of the principal people of Belfast were taken up. The law is in that state, that men may be kept in prison without trial; is that any inference of their guilt? I have seen the wanton prosecutions of Government in this country, which juries happily checked. I have seen too much of these prosecutions to make me draw an inference of guilt from the circumstance of a man's being taken up. I have heard in Ireland of men being ignominiously arrested and carried to Dublin, who, in their trials were found to be perfectly innocent, and ought not to have been suspected. The people of the north, attached to these men, were determined that they should not suffer in their property. The people worked for nothing; they reaped their harvests, on purpose to shew either their good-will to the parties, or their detestation possibly of the conduct of Government. This, however, was construed to be a heinous offence; the people were dispersed by the military; and when some were killed, the attending the bodies to the grave was deemed criminal, and the persons assisting were dispersed, as if they were doing an act against the state. That these things will goad who can doubt? Is it not possible that they who prefer monarchy may find the exercise of it to be so bad, as almost to doubt the excellence of monarchical government? But should the people be even totally subdued, can you do otherwise than keep up a large military force? But suppose the people submit—I put the case in that way—can you trust to such a situation? Will their submission to laws which they detest, last longer than your power lasts, and their impotency? Will you continue to keep up your force? During the war, I believe you will; but can Ireland afford to maintain it during peace? Is it the way to persuade the Catholics to assist you, to refuse to accord to their demands? I have

heard that a direct application has been made, not from the Catholic peasantry, but from the Catholic nobility, a strong and urgent application to the government to grant the remainder of their demands. I have been told, what certainly it was unnecessary to tell me, that these applications have been unsuccessful. Refuse all these demands—determine to govern Ireland by military force—risk a civil war,—which of these evils is the worst I know not. But it may be said, what is to be done? My general principle is to restore peace on principles of peace, and to make concession on principles of concession. I wish members to read that celebrated speech of Mr. BURKE on the subject of such concessions; let them read that beautiful display of eloquence, and at the same time sound reasoning, and they will find in that speech all those principles which it is my wish to have adopted. ‘Liberty, (says Mr. BURKE in a passage of some other part of his work,) is any practical purpose, is that which the people think so; you must give them that government which they wish; you must give them the British constitution in its substance and spirit.’ Apply this to Ireland; make it such a government as the people shall conceive to be a free one. But, it is said, it is not possible to satisfy all persons. It may be so; but is there one concession that could be made to the Catholics which the people in the north of Ireland could object to? Is there any grievance which could be remedied in the north, which the Catholics would object? They have no inconsistent pretensions, no clashing interests.—The concessions to be made to the different parties are not inconsistent; the one party will not repine at the satisfaction which the other obtains. Who then would be dissatisfied by such concessions? Not the aristocracy, for I will not call it by so respectable a name; and is that miserable monopolizing minority to be put in the balance with the preservation of the empire and the happiness of a whole

people? The Irish wish to have a reform upon an extended scale; they desire an extension of popular rights; but may there not be a conciliation and compromise? In that declaration of the people of Belfast, I see that they do most distinctly state, that they conceive all the benefits of freedom may be enjoyed under a government of King, Lords, and Commons.

“What then is it that the people wish for? They wish for a different constitution in the House of Commons. I think they are right. They desire a diminution of patronage, and they may go to the extraordinary length of saying, that it is not right to have a church in all its splendor, which is applicable only to a small part of the inhabitants. But do not these things admit of moderate discussion, and satisfactory compromise? What they ask is a constitution such as Great Britain has according to some, and such as she ought to have according to others,—a government which shall virtually express the will of the people; and if in treating with them you should fail—you will then have to resort to violent measures, you will then have to divide the people, as Mr. BURKE said, not to divide the people of Massachusetts from the people of Virginia—not to divide Boston from Carolina—not, I say, to divide Ulster from Connaught, and Leinster from Munster; but you will divide the people who wish for the constitution from those who wish to destroy it. These are the divisions which I wish for. But conciliation, it may be said, will not do—if it will not, then only may we have recourse to arms. Is there a worse period for the country in point of credit and resources? I know not but I am sure, that we cannot do worse, than at the end of one war, adopt measures to bring on another. I would therefore concede; and if I found I had not conceded enough, I would concede more. I know of no way of governing mankind but by conciliating them, and according to the forcible way which the Irish have of expressing their

meaning. I know of no mode of governing the people, but by letting them have their own way. And what shall we lose by it? If Ireland is governed by conceding to all her ways and wishes, will she be less useful to Great Britain? What is she now? little more than a diversion for the army.—If you keep Ireland by force now, what must you do in all future wars? You must in the first place secure her from insurrection. I will adopt therefore the Irish expression, and say, that you can only govern Ireland by letting her have her own way. The consequences of a war with Ireland are dreadful to contemplate; public horrors would be so increased by the laceration of private feelings, as to spread universal misery through both countries; the connection is so interwoven between the individuals of both countries; that no rupture can happen without wounding the most tender friendships and the most sacred ties. Rigour has already been attempted; let concession and conciliation then be tried before the last appeal is hazarded. My wish is, that the whole people of Ireland should have the same principles, the same system, the same operation of government, and though it may be a subordinate consideration, that all classes should have an equal chance of emolument; in other words, I would have the whole Irish government regulated by Irish notions, and Irish prejudices, and I firmly believe, according to another Irish expression, the more she is under Irish government, the more will she be bound to English Interests. One word or two on the subject of lord FITZWILLIAMS's administration; he went to Ireland, and after a short residence was recalled; I wish to ask those who know that country best, whether the day of his departure was not the day of the greatest sorrow? That his lordship has many qualities to render him popular, I know; but his popularity in Ireland was derived from this circumstance, that he went upon the principle of concession. What

happened after his departure? Those who look only superficially at events boasted that the effects which had been predicted in consequence of his lordship's recal, did not happen. The Catholic petition was rejected. I said that these appearances were deceitful, that the effects might not be immediate, but would be certain. See what has happened, and say, whether you cannot conceive that great part of the present distracted state of that country, has been produced by the hopes of the people having been disappointed, and by the cup of enjoyment having been dashed from their lips. You may be now in a situation somewhat similar. The measures you have adopted may produce apparent quiet, but I warn you against premature exultation. That the present state of Ireland can afford no satisfaction, all must admit—that there is so great a part of the King's subjects as the county of Down contains, out of the King's peace, and the pale of the constitution, is a circumstance which we must all lament; and should it lead to civil dissention, no man, I am sure, but will feel the horrible situation in which individuals would be involved, and calamities that would be entailed upon the public. Sir, I say, therefore, try conciliation, but do not have recourse to force of arms, which if once attempted to a considerable degree, cannot be remedied or recalled. In case of a civil dissention whom can you rely upon? not upon that small part of monopolists, many of whom could not bring so many men into the field, as they bring members into parliament. I scarce can conceive that any objection can be urged against the present motion in point of form. The interests of this country and of Ireland are the same; its affairs are conducted by ministers and the British cabinet, and it is the privilege of this House to advise His Majesty. If I were to justify the measure by precedent, I might quote the case of an impeachment of the earl of LAUDERDALE by the English parliament, before the union, for the conduct of the

government of Scotland. But why should I speak of forms when the consequence of the discontents in Ireland may be a contest to be supported by English men and English money? I shall therefore move,

“That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the disturbed state of his kingdom of Ireland, and to adopt such healing and lenient measures as may appear to His Majesty’s wisdom best calculated to restore tranquillity, and to conciliate the affections of all descriptions of His Majesty’s subjects in that kingdom to His Majesty’s person and government.”

The motion was seconded by sir FRANCIS BURDETT, who, without hesitation, avowed his opinion, “that there was but one way of saving Ireland; of saving England; and that was by divesting the present minister of the power he had so long and so fatally abused, and calling him to a strict account at the tribunal of his country.”

Mr. PITT opposed the motion as improperly calculated to advise His Majesty to give effects which, constitutionally, could originate only in the parliament of Ireland, the natural source of legislative arrangements in that country. He objected also to the measures meant to be recommended by the motion, and affirmed “that farther concessions would be highly imprudent on our part. By introducing Catholics into the legislative body, the acts of settlement, and the very existence of the established church in that kingdom would be endangered; nor was it upon such a foundation that he would build the future fabric of the peace of Ireland. To agree to any essential alteration of the present constitution of parliament, while such principles were abroad in the world, and were even prevalent in this country, would be attended with the most pernicious consequences.”

After a variety of other speeches on both sides, the House divided; for Mr. Fox's motion 84—against it 220.

The year following [1798] the flames of rebellion burst forth in Ireland, but were soon extinguished in blood; after which Mr. PITT brought forward his plan of union, which met with some obstructions at first, but was finally received and sanctioned by the legislatures of both countries. It was after its first rejection by the Irish parliament, that Mr. PITT on the 31st of January 1799 introduced the subject a second time into the English House of Commons and addressed the chair nearly in the following words;

“ SIR,

“ When I proposed to the House, the last time this subject was before them, to fix this day for the further consideration of His Majesty's message, I certainly indulged the hope that the result of a similar communication to the parliament of Ireland would have opened a more favorable prospect than at present exists, of the speedy accomplishment of a measure which I then stated, and which I still consider, to be of the greatest importance to the power, the stability, and the general welfare of the empire; to the immediate interests of both kingdoms; and more particularly to the peace, the tranquillity, and the safety of Ireland: in this hope, I am sorry to say, I have for the present been disappointed, by the proceedings of the Irish house of commons, of which we have been informed since this subject was last under consideration.

“ I feel and know that the parliament of Ireland possesses the power, the entire competence, on the behalf of that country, alike to accept or reject a proposition of this nature—a power which I am by no means inclined to dispute. I see that at the present moment one house of parliament in Ireland has expressed a repugnance even to

the consideration of the measure. Feeling, sir, as I have already stated, that it is important, not only as it tends to the general prosperity of the empire of Great Britain, but, (what, under every situation, must always be to me an object of the greatest moment) feeling that it was designed and calculated to increase the prosperity and ensure the safety of Ireland, I must have seen with the deepest regret, that at the very first moment, and before the nature of the measure could be known, it was so received.

“ But whatever may have been my feelings upon this subject, knowing that it is the undoubted right of the legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt such measures as may appear to them injurious or beneficial, far be it from me to speak of its determination in any other terms but those of respect. Let it not, therefore, be imagined that I am inclined to press any sentiment, however calculated it may appear to me to benefit every member of the empire, in any manner which may lead to hostile discussion between two kingdoms, whose mutual happiness and safety depend upon their being strictly and cordially united. But while I admit and respect the rights of the parliament in Ireland, I feel that, as a member of the parliament of Great Britain, I also have a right to exercise, and a duty to perform. That duty is to express, as distinctly as I can, the general nature and outline of the plan, which, in my conscience, I think would tend in the strongest manner to ensure the safety and the happiness of both kingdoms.

“ While, I feel, therefore, that as long as the house of commons of Ireland view the subject in the light they do at present, there is no chance of its adoption, I do not think that I ought on that account to abstain from submitting it to the consideration of this parliament; on the contrary, I think it only the more necessary to explain distinctly the principles of the measure, and to state the

grounds upon which it appears to me to be entitled to the approbation of the legislature.

“ If parliament, when it is in possession of the basis upon which this plan is founded, and of its general outlines, should be of opinion with me, that it is founded upon fair, just, and equitable principles, calculated to produce mutual advantages to the two kingdoms—if parliament, I say, upon full explanation, and after mature deliberation, should be of that opinion, I should propose that its determination should remain recorded as that by which the parliament of Great Britain is ready to abide, leaving to the legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt it hereafter, upon a full consideration of the subject.

“ There is no man who will deny, that, in a great question of this nature, involving in it objects which, in the first instance, are more likely to be decided upon by passion than by judgment; in a question in which an honest, but, I must be allowed to say, a mistaken sense of national pride is so likely to operate, much misconception and misconception must inevitably happen. It therefore becomes the more necessary that the intentions of the government which proposes the measure, and the principles of the measure itself, should be distinctly understood. But, sir, in stating that intention and those principles, I look to something more than a mere vindication of government for having proposed the measure. I do entertain a confidence, even under the apparent discouragement of the opinion expressed by the Irish house of commons, that this measure is founded upon such clear, such demonstrable grounds of utility, is so calculated to add to the strength and power of the empire (in which the safety of Ireland is included, and from which it never can be separated), and is attended with so many advantages to Ireland in particular, that all that can be necessary for its ultimate adoption is, that it should be stated distinctly, temperately, and fully, and that it should

Be left to the unprejudiced, the dispassionate, the sober judgment of the parliament of Ireland. I wish that those whose interests are involved in this measure should have time for its consideration—I wish that time should be given to the landed, to the mercantile, and manufacturing interest, that they should look at it in all its bearings, and that they should coolly examine and sift the popular arguments by which it has been opposed, and that then they should give their deliberate and final judgment.

“ I am the more encouraged in this hope of the ultimate success of this measure, when I see, notwithstanding all the prejudices which it has excited, that barely more than one half of the members that attended the house of commons were adverse to it; and that in the other house of parliament in Ireland, containing as it does, so large a portion of the property of that kingdom, it was approved of by a large majority. When I have reason to believe that the sentiments of a large part of the people of that country are favorable to it, and that much of the manufacturing, and of the commercial interest of Ireland, are already sensible how much it is calculated to promote their advantage, I think, when it is more deliberately examined, and when it is seen in what temper it is here proposed and discussed, that it will still terminate in that which can alone be a fortunate result.

“ It would be vain indeed to hope that a proposition upon which prejudices are so likely to operate, and which is so liable to misconception, should be unanimously approved. But the approbation I hope for is that of the parliament of Ireland, and of the intelligent part of the public of that country. It is with a view to this object that I think it my duty to bring this measure forward at present; not for the sake of urging its immediate adoption, but that it may be known and recorded; that the intention of the British parliament may be known, in the

hope that it will produce similar sentiments among our countrymen in Ireland. With this view, it is my intention not to go at present into any detailed statement of the plan, because, should it ultimately be adopted, the minuter parts must necessarily become the objects of much distinct discussion ; but to give such a general statement of the nature of the measure, as will enable the House to form a correct judgment upon it. I shall therefore, sir, before I sit down, open to the House a string of resolutions, comprising the general heads of this plan. It will be necessary for me, for the purpose of discussing those resolutions with regularity and convenience, to move that the House should resolve itself into a committee. And I have already stated, that it is not my intention then to press the committee to come to an immediate decision upon these resolutions ; but if, upon full and deliberate examination, the resolutions which I shall have the honor to propose, and which contain as much as is necessary for an outline of the plan, shall be approved, my opinion is, that nothing can contribute more to obviate any doubts and dissatisfaction which may exist, than that parliament should adopt those resolutions, and that it should then humbly lay them at the foot of the throne, leaving it to His Majesty's wisdom to communicate them to the parliament of Ireland, whenever circumstances should appear favorable to such a measure. I shall therefore, sir, proceed as shortly as I can to state to the House the nature of the resolutions, and of the address which I shall propose to accompany them, if it should be the pleasure of the House to adopt them.

“ Having now, sir, explained to the House the mode I mean to pursue, and my reasons for persisting, under the present circumstances, in submitting this measure to the consideration of parliament, I will endeavour to state the general grounds on which it rests, the general argu-

ments by which it is recommended, and to give a short view of the outline of the plan.

“As to the general principle upon which the whole of this measure is founded, I am happy to observe, from what passed on a former occasion, that there is not any probability of a difference of opinion. The general principle, to which both sides of the house perfectly acceded, is, that a perpetual connection between Great Britain and Ireland is essential to the interests of both. The only honorable gentleman who, when this subject was before the House on a former day, opposed the consideration of the plan altogether, stated, in terms as strong as I could wish, the necessity of preserving the strictest connection between the two countries. I most cordially agree with him in that opinion; but I then stated, that I do not barely wish for the maintenance of that connection, as tending to add to the general strength of the empire, but I wish for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that can give to Ireland its due weight and importance, as a great member of the empire. I wish for it with a view of giving to that country the means of improving all its great natural resources, and of giving it a full participation of all those blessings which this country so eminently enjoys.

“Considering the subject in this point of view, and assuming it as a proposition not to be controverted, that it is the duty of those who wish to promote the interest and prosperity of both countries, to maintain the strongest connection between them, let me ask, what is the situation of affairs that has called us to the discussion of this subject? This very connection, the necessity of which has been admitted on all hands, has been attacked by foreign enemies, and by domestic traitors. The dissolution of this connection is the great object of the hostility of the

common enemies of both countries ; it is almost the only remaining hope with which they now continue the contest. Baffled and defeated as they have hitherto been, they still retain the hope, they are still meditating attempts to dissolve that connection. In how many instances already the defeat of their hostile designs has been turned to the confirmation of our strength and security, I need not enumerate. God grant that in this instance the same favor of divine Providence, which has in so many instances protected this empire, may again interpose in our favor, and that the attempts of the enemy to separate the two countries, may tend ultimately to knit them more closely together, to strengthen a connection, the best pledge for the happiness of both, and so add to that power which forms the chief barrier to the civilized world, against the destructive principles, the dangerous projects, and the unexampled usurpation of France.—This connection has been attacked not only by the avowed enemies of both countries, but by internal treason, acting in concert with the designs of the enemy—internal treason, which ingrafted jacobinism on those diseases which necessarily grew out of the state and condition of Ireland. Thinking, then, as we must all think, that a close connection with Ireland is essential to the interests of both countries, and seeing how much this connection is attacked, let it not be insinuated that it is unnecessary, much less improper, at this arduous and important crisis, to see whether some new arrangements, some fundamental regulations, are not necessary to guard against the threatened danger. The foreign and domestic enemies of these kingdoms have shewn, that they think this the vulnerable point in which we may be most successfully attacked : let us derive advantage, if we can, from the hostility of our enemies ; let us profit by the designs of those who, if their conduct displays no true wisdom, at least possesses in an eminent degree that species of wisdom which is

calculated for the promotion of mischief. They know upon what footing that connection rests at this moment between the two countries, and they feel the most ardent hope, that the two parliaments will be infatuated enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that connection upon a more solid basis.

These circumstances, I am sure, will not be denied. And if upon other grounds we had any doubt, these circumstances alone ought to induce us, deliberately and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which is but too apparent. It requires but a moment's reflection, for any man who has marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of this connection. It is evidently one which does not afford that security which, even in times less dangerous and less critical than the present, would have been necessary, to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and its resources.

“ When I last addressed the House on this subject, I stated that the settlement, which was made in 1782, so far from deserving the name of a final adjustment, was one that left the connection between Great Britain and Ireland exposed to all the attacks of party and all the effects of accident. That settlement consisted in the demolition of the system which before held the two countries together. Let me not be understood as expressing any regret at the termination of that system. I disapproved of it, because I thought it was unworthy the liberality of Great Britain, and injurious to the interests of Ireland. But to call that a system in itself—to call that a glorious fabric of human wisdom, which is no more than the mere demolition of another system, is a perversion of terms, which, however prevalent of late, can only be the effect of gross misconception, or of great hypocrisy.

“ We boast that we have done every thing, when we have merely destroyed all that before existed, without substituting any thing in its place. Such was the *final adjustment* of 1782 ; and I can prove it to be so, not only from the plainest reasoning, but I can prove it by the opinion expressed by the British parliament at that very time. I can prove it by the opinion expressed by those very ministers by whom it was proposed and conducted. I can prove it by the opinion of that very government who boast of having effected a final adjustment. I refer for what I have said to proofs which they will find it very difficult to answer.—I mean their own acts, which plainly shew that they were of opinion that a new system would be necessary.

“ But sir, I will go farther—I will also produce the authority of one of those whose influence, on the present occasion, has been peculiarly exerted to prevent the discussion of the question in Ireland—of one, of whom I do not wish to speak but with respect, but for whom, nevertheless, I should convey an idea of more respect than I can now feel to be due to him. If I were merely to describe him as the person who fills the same situation, in the house of commons of Ireland, which you, sir, hold among us, and of which, on all occasions, *you* discharge the duties with a dignity and impartiality which reflects so much credit on yourself, and so well supports the character and authority of the House.

“ On a former night, I read an extract from the journals, to shew what was the opinion even of those by whom the final adjustment was proposed on that measure. It would there appear, that the message was sent to the parliament of Ireland, recommending to them the adoption of some plan for a final adjustment between the two countries, and wishing to know what were the grounds of the grievances of which they complained. In answer to this message, the parliament of Ireland stated certain

grievances, the principal of which was, the power claimed by the parliament of Great Britain of making laws to bind Ireland ; but, with respect to that part of the message which related to the propriety of adopting some measures for a final adjustment between the two countries, they were wholly silent. This address was laid before the parliament of Great Britain, to whom a similar message had been previously sent, and on that ground was moved the repeal of what was called the declaratory act ; which motion was assented to by the British parliament. This satisfaction was complete in Ireland, as far as related to the grievance of which her parliament complained, viz, ' the power of the British parliament of making laws for Ireland,' because, by the repeal of the declaratory act, that power was given up. But so far was the minister of that day from considering that the repeal of that law finally terminated all differences, and established the connection between the two countries upon a solid basis, that he thought it necessary to move that a farther settlement was indispensable for the maintenance of that connection."

Mr. SHERIDAN, across the table, desired that that part of the journals to which Mr. PITT alluded might be read.

" Sir, I have stated the substance of the journals correctly ; they were read on a former night, and the honorable gentleman may, if he chuses, have them read again ; if he does, he will find that they fully justify the statement I have made ; but I beg that at present I may not be interrupted. I do maintain, that, upon a reference to the journals of the period to which I have alluded, it will appear that a farther agreement between Great Britain and Ireland is there stated, in the opinion of the administration of the day, to be absolutely necessary.

" I beg farther to state, that after the motion for the bill, of which so much has been said, was passed, an ad-

dress to His Majesty was moved and carried, praying him to take such further measures as to him seemed proper, to strengthen the connection between the two countries. His Majesty's most gracious answer, stating that, in compliance with the address, he would immediately take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose, was delivered to the House by an honorable gentleman [Mr. Fox] who then filled the office of secretary of state, and whom we have not lately seen in the house, though he still continues to be a member of it. I do assert, without the least fear of contradiction from any gentleman whatever, that it was in the contemplation of the government of that day to adopt some measures of the nature alluded to in the address; since that period, however, no such measure has been taken. I do also maintain, that that very system which by these very ministers who brought it forward was found to be imperfect, even for the purpose of maintaining the connection between the two countries, remains at this moment in the same imperfect state. It leaves the two countries with separate and independent legislatures, connected only with this tie, that the third estate in both countries is the same—that the executive government is the same—that the crown exercises its power of assenting to Irish acts of parliament, under the great seal of Great Britain, and by the advice of British ministers.

“ This is the only principle of connection which is left by the final adjustment of 1782.—Whether this is a sufficient tie to unite them in time of peace; whether in time of war it is sufficient to consolidate their strength against a common enemy; whether it is sufficient to guard against those local jealousies which must necessarily sometimes exist between countries so connected; whether it is calculated to give to Ireland all the important commercial and political advantages which she would derive from a closer connection with Great Britain; whe-

ther it can give to both nations that degree of strength and prosperity which must be the result of such a measure as the present, I believe needs only to be stated to be decided.

But I have already said, ~~that~~ I have, upon this point, the authority of an opinion to which I before alluded—an opinion delivered upon a very important measure, very soon after the final adjustment of 1782. The measure to which I refer, was that of the commercial propositions which were brought forward in 1785. I am not now going to enter into a discussion of the merits of that measure. The best, perhaps, that can be said of it is, that it went as far as circumstances would then permit, to draw the two countries to a closer connection. But those who think that the adjustment of 1782 was final, and that it contained all that was necessary for the establishment of the connection between the two countries upon a firm basis, can hardly contend that the commercial propositions of 1785 were necessary to prevent the danger of separation between the two countries, and to prevent the conflicting operation of independent legislatures. Yet, if I am not mistaken, there will be found, upon a reference to better records than those in which parliamentary debates are usually stated (I mean a statement of what passed in the discussion upon those propositions fourteen years ago, made, as I have understood, by some of the principal parties themselves) that the chancellor of the exchequer of that day in Ireland [Mr. FOSTER] in a debate upon the Irish propositions, held this language, ‘ If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain. ‘ Here the right honorable gentleman was happily mistaken ; Ireland has again had the offer of the same advantages but more complete, and in all respects better calculated to attain their object ; and this offer the right honorable gentleman has exerted all his influence to reject.—But he goes on to say, ‘ *things*

cannot remain as they are.—Commercial jealousy is roused—it will increase with *two independent legislatures*—and without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and *separation of interest* must threaten *separation of connection*, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at as a possible event.’

Gentlemen will have the goodness to observe, that I am not now quoting these expressions as pledges given by that right honorable gentleman that he would support a proposal for an union between the two countries; but I am adducing them to prove, that the situation of the two countries after the final adjustment of 1782, was such, in his opinion, as led to the danger of a separation between them. I am not now arguing, that a legislative union is the only measure which can possibly be adopted; but I am contending that the adjustment of 1782 was never considered as final by those who now state it to be so, as an argument against the consideration of the present measure. How the honorable gentleman on the other side of the House will evade this authority, I do not know—an authority to which, I must observe, he seems much more inclined to treat with respect than he was formerly. But, Sir, it does not stop there.—What is the evil to which he alludes? Commercial jealousies between the two countries acting upon the laws of two independent legislatures, and the danger of those legislatures acting in opposition to each other. How can this evil be remedied? By two means only; either by some compacts entered into by the legislatures of the two countries, respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations, or else by blending the two legislatures together: these are the only two means. I defy the wit of man to point out a third. The mode of compact was proposed in 1785; but, unfortunately, in spite of that right honorable gentleman’s eloquence and authority, who then stated the importance of

guarding against the evil, it so happened that doctrines, derived chiefly from this side of the water, succeeded in convincing the parliament of Ireland, that it would be inconsistent with their independence to enter into any compact whatever. We have then the authority of that right honorable gentleman to whom I have so often alluded, that the unsettled state in which the matter was left, would give political union many shocks, and lead to a separation of connection.

The experiment of a mutual compact has been tried without success; the arrangement of that sort, which was proposed in 1785, in order to obviate the inconveniences stated by the right honorable gentleman, was then attacked with the same success against his authority, as another and more effectual remedy has recently experienced under his auspices. The result then is, you must remain in the state which that right honorable gentleman has described, with the seeds of separation in the system now established, and with the connection, on which the mutual prosperity of both countries depends in danger of being hourly dissolved, or you must again recur to the proposal of a compact similar to that rejected in 1785, or you must resort to the best and most effectual remedy—a *legislative union*.

I have dwelt longer, perhaps, upon this part of the subject than was absolutely necessary, because I believe there is scarcely any man who has ever asked himself, whether there is a solid, permanent system of connection between the two countries, who could, upon reflection, answer the question in the affirmative. But besides the authorities of the persons who made the arrangements in 1782, and of those who have since treated of it, to shew that it was not deemed final and complete, I have further the test of experience to shew how imperfect it was, and how inadequate in practice to the great object of cementing the connection, and placing it beyond the danger of being

dissolved. In the single instance which has occurred, (and that a melancholy one which all of us deplored) in which we could feel the effects of two jarring legislatures, we did feel it. On that occasion, it might have produced the most signal calamities, had we not been rescued from its danger by an event, to which no man can now look back without feeling the utmost joy and exultation ;—feelings, which subsequent circumstances have served to heighten and confirm. Every gentleman will know, that I must allude to the regency. With two independent legislatures, acting upon different principles, it was accident alone that preserved the identity of the executive power, which is the bond and security of the connection ; and even then the executive authority, though vested in one person, would have been held by two different tenures, by one tenure in England, by another in Ireland, had not the interposition of Providence prevented a circumstance pregnant with the most imminent perils, and which might have operated to a separation of the two kingdoms.

After seeing the recorded opinion of Parliament, of those who made the arrangement of 1782, and after the decided testimony of experience on the subject, within the short period of sixteen years, perhaps it is hardly necessary to appeal to farther proofs of its inadequacy, or to desire gentlemen to look forward to possible cases, which I could easily put, and which will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of all who chuse to turn their attention to the subject.

But when we consider the distinct powers possessed by the two legislatures on all the great questions of peace and war, of alliances and confederacies (for they each have in principle a right to discuss them, and to decide upon them, though one of them has hitherto been wisely restrained by discretion from the exercise of that right) have we not seen circumstances to induce us to think it

possible, at least, that on some of these important questions the opinions and decisions of the two parliaments might have been at variance? Are we talking of an indissoluble connection, when we see it thus perpetually liable to be endangered? Can we really think that the interests of this empire, or of its different branches, rest upon a safe and solid basis at present? I am anxious to discuss this point closely with any man, either here or in Ireland. Will it be said, that the parliament of the latter country is bound by our decision on the question of peace or war? And if not so bound, will any man, looking at human nature as it is, contend, that there is a sufficient certainty that the decision on that important subject will always be the same in both countries? I should be glad to receive a distinct answer to this question from the right honorable gentleman, who has declared himself to be as warm a friend to the connection between the two countries as I am.

Suppose, for instance, that the present war, which the parliament of Great Britain considers to be just and necessary, had been voted by the Irish parliament to be unjust, unnecessary, extravagant, and hostile to the principles of humanity and freedom, would that parliament have been bound by this country? If not, what security have we, at a moment the most important to our common interest and common salvation, that the two kingdoms should have but one friend and one foe? I repeat it: I am eager to hear what can be said in justification of a basis so imperfect and unsound, and liable to be shaken by so many accidents.

“ I have already observed, that in the peculiar circumstances of the present moment we may find stronger reasons to prove the necessity of correcting the system of connection between this country and Ireland, of supplying its imperfections, and strengthening its weakness, than are to be found at any former period.

“ Having thus stated, Sir, and I think sufficiently proved, that the settlement of 1782, in every point of view in which it can be considered, is imperfect, and inadequate to the object of maintaining the connection between the two kingdoms, I proceed next to the circumstances which peculiarly call upon us at the present moment to remedy that imperfection.

“ This country is at this time engaged in the most important and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the history of the world ; a conflict in which Great Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilized society. We see the point in which that enemy thinks us the most assailable. Are we not then bound in policy and prudence to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of liberty against despotism—of property against plunder and rapine—of religion and order against impiety and anarchy ? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation ; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French principles and French arms), which are every day attested by the wounds of a bleeding world.

“ Is there a man who does not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, may augment the strength of the empire, and thereby ensure its safety ? Would not that benefit to Ireland be of itself so solid, so inestimable, that in comparison with it, all commercial interests, and the preservation of local habits and manners would be trifling, even if they were endangered by the present measure, which they undoubtedly are not ? The people of Ireland are proud, I believe, of being associated with us in the great contest in which we are engaged, and must feel the advantage of augmenting the general force of the empire. That the present measure is calculated

to produce that effect, is a proposition which, I think, cannot be disputed. There is not in any court of Europe a statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the general power of the empire would be increased, to a very great extent indeed, by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. In the course of the century every writer of any information on the subject has held the same language, and in the general strength of the empire both kingdoms are more more concerned than in any particular interests which may belong to either. If we were to ask the ministers of our allies, what measure they thought the most likely to augment the power of the British empire, and consequently increase that strength by which they were now protected—if we were to ask the agent of our enemies, what measure would be the most likely to render their designs abortive, the answer would be the same in both cases, viz. ‘the firm consolidation of every part of the empire.’

“There is another consideration well worth attention. Recollect what are the peculiar means by which we have been enabled to resist the unequalled and eccentric efforts of France, without any diminution, nay, with an increase of our general prosperity—what, but the great commercial resources which we possess? A measure, then, which must communicate to such a mighty limb of the empire as Ireland all the commercial advantages which Great Britain possesses, which will open the markets of the one country to the other, which will give them both the common use of their capital, must, by diffusing a large portion of wealth into Ireland, considerably increase the resources, and consequently the strength of the whole empire.

“But it is not merely in this general view that I think the question ought to be considered. We ought to look to it with a view peculiarly to the permanent interest and

security of Ireland. When that country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by enemies without, and of treason within, from what quarter did she derive the means of her deliverance?—from the naval force of Great Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her military of every description, not called for by law; and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the inhabitants of Ireland itself; of which it is impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shews how well they deserve to be called the brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps, have ultimately succeeded in repelling the dangers by which they were threatened, but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Are we sure that the same ready and effectual assistance which we have happily afforded, on the present occasion, will be always equally within our power? Great Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that common interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the common enemy made her attack upon Great Britain, through the medium of Ireland; and when their attack upon Ireland went to deprive her of her connection with Great Britain, and to substitute in its stead the new government of the French Republic. When that danger threatened Ireland, the purse of Great Britain was as open for the wants of Ireland, as for the necessities of England.

“ I do not, Sir, state these circumstances as upbraiding Ireland for the benefits we have conferred: far from it; but I state them with pleasure, as shewing the friendship and good-will with which this country has acted towards her. But if struggles of this sort may and must return again; if the worst dangers are those which are yet to come, dangers which may be greater from being more disguised; if those situations may arise when the same means of relief are not in our power, what is the

remedy that reason and policy point out? It is to identify them with us; it is to make them a part of the same community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great Britain; it is, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the wealth, the power, and the stability of the British empire. If then this measure comes recommended not only by the obvious defects of the system which now exists, but that it has also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the empire, and of guarding against future danger from the common enemy, we ought next to consider it as to its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

“ I know perfectly well, that as long as Ireland is separated from Great Britain, any attempt on our part to provide measures which we might think salutary, as respecting questions of contending sects or parties, of the claimed rights of the Catholics, or of the precautions necessary for the security of the protestants—I know that all these, though they may have been brought forward by the very persons who are the advocates of the final adjustment in 1782, were, in fact, attacks upon the independence of the Irish parliament, and attempts to usurp the right of deciding on points which can only be brought within our province by compact. Until the kingdoms are united, any attempts to make regulations here for the internal state of Ireland must certainly be a violation of her independence. But feeling as I do for their interests and their welfare, I cannot be inattentive to the events that are passing before me; I must therefore repeat, that whoever looks at the circumstances to which I have alluded; whoever considers that the enemy have shewn by their conduct that they considered Ireland as the weakest and most vulnerable part of the empire; whoever reflects upon those dreadful and inexcusable cruelties instigated by the enemies of both countries, and upon those lamentable

severities by which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which is itself one great aggravation of the crimes and treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stands composed, in the hostile division of its sects, in the animosities existing between ancient settlers and original inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of civilization, which marks that country more than almost any other country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which have produced that distressed state which we now deplore; every one, I say, who reflects upon all these circumstances, must agree with me in thinking, that there is no cure but in the formation of a general imperial legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, uninfluenced by the prejudices, and uninflamed by the passions of that distracted country.

“ I know that it is impossible, if we wish to consider this subject properly, to consider it in any other point of view than as it affects the empire in general. I know that the interests of the two countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman, unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as a true Irishman, unless he speaks as a true Englishman; but if it were possible to separate them, and I could consider myself as addressing you, not as interested for the empire at large, but for Ireland alone, I should say, that it would be indispensably necessary, for the sake of that country, to compose its present distractions by the adoption of another system;—I should say, that the establishment of an imperial legislature was the only means of healing its wounds, and of restoring it to tranquillity. I must here take the liberty of alluding to some topics which were touched upon during the discussion of the former night.

“ Among the great and known defects of Ireland, one of the most prominent features is, its want of industry and a capital: how are those wants to be supplied but by blending more closely with Ireland the industry and the capital of this country? But, above all, in the great leading distinction between the people of Ireland (I mean their religious distinctions,) what is their situation? The Protestant feels that the claims of the Catholics threaten the existence of the Protestant ascendancy; while, on the other hand, the great body of Catholics feel the establishment of the national church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, a grievance. Between the two, it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

“ I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a delicate and dangerous topic, especially when applied to a country such as Ireland, the situation of which is different in this respect from that of every other. Where the established religion of the state is the same as the general religion of the empire, and where the property of the country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion, while the religion of a great majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say, on general principles, what system of church establishment in such a country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many I know it will be contended, that the religion professed by the majority of the people would, at least, be intitled to an equality of privileges. I have heard such an argument urged in this House; but those who apply it without qualification to the case of Ireland, forget surely the principles on which English interest and English connection has been established in that country, and on which its present legislature is formed. No man can

say, that in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics, without endangering the state, and shaking the constitution of Ireland to its centre.

“ On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it, two propositions are indisputable ; first, when the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to a participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favorable to such a measure when these events shall take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in an united, imperial parliament, with much greater safety than it could be in a separate legislature. In the second place, I think it certain, that even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the union, to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed, if the Protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial ; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.

“ How far, in addition to this great and leading consideration, it may also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of tithes, which, in many instances, operate at present as a great practical evil, or to make, under proper regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the present protestant establishment, an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic clergy, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is sufficient to say, that these and all other subordinate points connected with the same subject, are more likely to be permanently and

satisfactorily settled by an united legislature, than by any local arrangements. On these grounds I contend, that with a view to providing an effectual remedy for the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, with a view of removing those causes which have endangered, and still endanger its security, the measure which I am now proposing promises to be more effectual than any other which can be devised ; and on those grounds alone, if there existed no other, I should feel it my duty to submit it to the House.

But, Sir, though what I have thus stated relates most immediately to the great object of healing the dissensions, and providing for the internal tranquillity of Ireland, there are also other objects which, though comparatively with this of inferior importance, are yet in themselves highly material, and in a secondary view well worthy of attention.

“ I have heard it asked, when I pressed the measure, what are the positive advantages that Ireland is to derive from it? To this very question I presume the considerations which I have already urged, afford a sufficient answer. But, in fact, the question itself is to be considered in another view ; and it will be found to bear some resemblance to a question which has been repeatedly put by some of the gentlemen opposite to me, during the last six years. What are the advantages which Great Britain has gained by the present war with France? To this, the brilliant successes of the British arms by sea and land, our unexampled naval victories over all our enemies, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the progressive extension of our commerce, and a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history, afford at once an ample and a satisfactory answer. But there is another general answer which we have uniformly given, and which would alone be sufficient; it is, that we did not

enter into this war for any purpose of ambition ; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve ; and in this sense what we have gained by the war is, in one word, ALL that we should have lost without it ; it is the preservation of our constitution, our independence, our honor, our existence as a nation.

“ In the same manner I might answer the question with respect to Ireland. I might enumerate the general advantages which Ireland would derive from the effects of the arrangement to which I have already referred—the protection which she will secure to herself in the hour of danger ; the most effectual means of increasing her commerce and improving her agriculture, the command of English capital, the infusion of English manners and English industry necessarily tending to ameliorate her condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilization, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distract the country, and which she does not possess, within herself, the power either to control or to extinguish. She would see the avenue to honors, to distinctions, and exalted situations in the general seat of empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honorable and laudable ambition.

“ But independent of all these advantages, I might also answer, that the question is not what Ireland is to gain, but what she is to preserve ; not merely how she may best improve her situation, but how she is to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gains is the preservation of all those blessings arising from the British constitution, and which are inseparable from her connections with Great Britain ; those blessings, of which it has long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, to deprive her, and on their ruins to establish (with all its attendant miseries and horrors) a Jacobin republic, founded on French influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.

“ Such, Sir, would be the answer, if we direct our attention only to the question of general advantage. And here I should be inclined to stop ; but since it has also been more particularly asked, what are the advantages which she is to gain, in point of commerce and manufactures, I am desirous of applying my answer more immediately and distinctly to that part of the subject ; and as I know that the statement will carry more conviction with it to those who make the inquiry, if given in the words of the right honorable gentleman, to whom, and to whose opinions I have had more than one occasion to advert in the course of this night, I will read you an extract from his recorded sentiments on the subject, in the year 1785, on this same memorable occasion of the commercial propositions. Speaking of a solid and unalterable compact between the two countries, speaking expressly of the peculiar importance of insuring the continuance of those commercial benefits, which she at that time held only at the discretion of this country, he says, ‘ The exportation of Irish products to England amounts to two millions and an half annually ; and the exportation of British products to Ireland amounts to but one million.’

He then proceeds to reason upon the advantage which Ireland would derive, under such circumstances, from guarding against mutual prohibitions ; and he accompanies the statement, which I have just read, with this observation :

“ If, indeed, the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it ; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derived from our linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it, surely, gentlemen who regard that trade, and whose fortunes and rents depend upon its prosperity, will not entertain a moment’s doubt about embracing the offer.

“ Such was the reasoning of the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, which I consider to be perfectly just. With reference to his late opinions, I do not think I can more forcibly reply to a person who signs his name to propositions which declare that the ruin of the linen trade of Ireland is likely to be the consequence of an union, than by opposing to him his own opinion. I shall be able to strengthen the former opinion of that gentleman, by stating, that the progress that has been made in commercial advantages to Ireland, since 1785, has been such as to render his argument still more applicable. What is the nature of that commerce, explained by the same person in so concise and forcible a manner, that I am happy to use his own statement? He does not confine himself to the gross amount, but gives the articles in detail.

“ Britain,” he says, ‘ imports annually from us two millions five hundred thousand pounds of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about a million of hers, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raise; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving any duty.’

“ I will not tire the patience of the House by reading farther extracts; but the right honorable gentleman’s whole speech, in like manner, points out the advantages of the commercial propositions (at that time under consideration) as a ground-work of a compact between the two countries, in 1786, on commercial subjects. But how stands the case now? The trade is at this time infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. It will be proved, from the documents which I hold in my hand, as far as relates to the mere interchange of manufactures, that the manufactures exported to Ireland from Great Britain, in 1797,

very little exceed a million sterling (the articles of produce amount to nearly the same sum) while Great Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near three millions in the manufactured articles of linen and linen yarn, and between two and three millions in provisions and cattle, besides corn and other articles of produce.

“ In addition to these articles, there are other circumstances of advantage to Ireland. Articles which are essential to her trade, and to her subsistence, or serve as raw materials for her manufactures, are sent from hence free of duty. It is expressly stated, on the same authority, that all that we take back from Ireland was liable to a duty in that country on their exports; the increasing produce of the chief article of their manufacture, and four-fifths of her whole export trade, are to be ascribed, not to that *independent legislature*, but to the liberality of the British parliament. It is by the free admission of linens for our market, and the bounties granted by the British parliament on its re-export, that the linen trade has been brought to the height at which we now see it. To the parliament of this country, then, it is now owing, that a market has been opened for her linen to the amount of three millions. By the bounty we give to Ireland, we afford her a double market for that article, and (what is still more striking and important) we have prevented a competition against her, arising from the superior cheapness of the linen manufactures of the Continent, by subjecting their importation to a duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly shew what would be the danger to Ireland from the competition in all the principal branches of its linen trade, than the simple fact, that we even now import foreign linens, under this heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland is able to send us, with the preference that has been stated. By this arrangement alone, we must, therefore,

be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds *per annum* in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty on all linens, Irish as well as foreign; or, on the other hand, as sacrificing, perhaps, at least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles, by the subjects of this country, which might be saved, if we allowed the importation of all linen, foreign as well as Irish, equally free from duty.

“ The present measure is, however, in its effects, calculated not merely for a confirmation of the advantages on which the person, to whom I have alluded, has insisted. It is obvious that a fuller and more perfect connection of the two countries, from whatever cause it may arise, must produce a greater facility and freedom of commercial intercourse, and ultimately tend to the advantage of both. The benefits to be derived to either country, from such an arrangement, must, indeed, in a great measure, be gradual; but they are not on that account the less certain; and they cannot be stated in more forcible language than that used in the speech to which I have referred.

“ Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures. I agree with them it may not operate soon; but we are to look forward to a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by bounties, jealousies, or legislative interference, from its natural and beneficial course. This system will attain its real object,

consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers !

“ I am, at least, therefore, secure from the design of appearing to deliver any partial or commercial opinion of my own, when I thus state, on the authority of a person the best informed, and who then judged dispassionately, both the infinite importance to Ireland of securing permanently the great commercial advantages which she now holds at the discretion of Great Britain, and the additional benefit which she would derive from any settlement which opened to her gradually a still more free and complete commercial intercourse with this country. And while I state thus strongly the commercial advantages to the sister kingdom, I have no alarm lest I should excite any sentiment of jealousy here. I know that the inhabitants of Great Britain wish well to the prosperity of Ireland ; that, if the kingdoms are really and solidly united, they feel that to increase the commercial wealth of one country, is not to diminish that of the other, but to increase the strength and power of both. But to justify that sentiment, we must be satisfied that the wealth we are pouring into the lap of Ireland is not every day liable to be snatched from us, and thrown into the scale of the enemy. If, therefore, Ireland is to continue, as I trust it will for ever, an essential part of the integral strength of the British empire ; if her strength is to be permanently ours, and our strength to be hers, neither I nor any English minister can ever be deterred, by the fear of creating jealousy in the hearts of Englishmen, from stating the advantages of a closer connection, or from giving any assistance to the commercial prosperity of that kingdom.

“ If ever, indeed, I should have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must

be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shall be at an end, I shall, at least, have the consolation of knowing, that it will not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which will have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great Britain. If ever the over-bearing power of prejudice and passion shall produce that fatal consequence, it will too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland at present enjoys, and which are continually increasing, are to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care of the British empire, extended to the sister kingdom as to a part of ourselves, and not (as has been fallaciously and vainly pretended) to any thing which has been done, or can be done, by the independent power of her own separate legislature.

“ I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to state to you the reasons, why I think this measure advisable ; why I wish it to be proposed to the parliament of Ireland, with temper and fairness ; and why it appears to me entitled, at least, to a calm and dispassionate discussion in that kingdom. I am aware, however, that objections have been urged against the measure, some of which are undoubtedly plausible, and have been but too successful in their influence on the Irish parliament. Of these objections I shall now proceed, as concisely as possible, to take some notice.

“ The first is, what I heard alluded to by the honorable gentleman opposite to me [Mr. SHERIDAN], when His Majesty’s message was brought down ; namely,— That the parliament of Ireland is incompetent to entertain and discuss the question, or rather, to act upon the measure proposed, without having previously obtained the consent of the people of Ireland, their constituents. But, Sir, I am led to suppose, from what the honorable

gentleman afterwards stated, that he made this objection, rather by way of deprecating the discussion of the question, than as entertaining the smallest doubt upon it himself. If, however, the honorable gentleman, or any other gentleman on the other side of the House, should seriously entertain a doubt on the subject, I shall be ready to discuss it with him distinctly, either this night or at any future opportunity. For the present, I will assume that no man can deny the competency of the parliament of Ireland, (representing as it does, in the language of our constitution, '*lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm*'), to make laws to bind that people, unless he is disposed to distinguish that parliament from the parliament of Great Britain, and, while he maintains the independence of the Irish legislature, yet denies to it the lawful and essential powers of parliament. No man, who maintains the parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, can deny its competency on this question, unless he means to go the length of denying, at the same moment, the whole of the authority of Great Britain—to shake every principle of legislation—and to maintain, that all the acts passed, and every thing done by parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, is neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the union between Scotland and England, but he must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the united legislature since the union; nay, Sir, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which we now sit and deliberate here as a House of Parliament: of course, he must deny the validity of the adjustment of 1782, and call in question every measure which he has himself been the most forward to have enforced. This point, Sir, is of so much importance, that I think it ought not to suffer the opportunity to pass, without illustrating more fully what I mean. If this

principle of the incompetency of parliament to the decision of the measure be admitted, or if it be contended, that parliament has no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, you will be driven to the necessity of recognising a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilized state.—I mean the principle, that parliament cannot adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and delegating authority for directions. If that doctrine be true, look to what an extent it will carry you. If such an argument could be set up and maintained, you acted without any legitimate authority when you created the representation of the principality of Wales, or of either counties palatine of England. Every law that parliament ever made, without that appeal, either as to its own frame and constitution, as to the qualifications of the electors or the elected, as to the great and fundamental point of the succession to the crown, was a breach of treaty and an act of usurpation.

“ If we turn to Ireland itself, what do gentlemen think of the power of that parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its protestant constituents, associates to itself all the Catholic electors, and thus destroys a fundamental distinction on which it was founded? God forbid that I should object to or blame any of these measures! I am only stating the extent to which the principle, that parliament has no authority to decide upon the present measure, will lead; and, if it be admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Will any man say, that (although a protestant parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by protestant constituents, has, by its own inherent power, and without consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the Catholics who were till then, in fact, a separate community) that parliament cannot associate itself with another protestant community, represented by a protestant parliament, having one inter-

est with itself, and similar in its laws, its constitution, and its established religion? What must be said by those who have at any time been friends to any plan of parliamentary reform, and particularly such as have been most recently brought forward, either in Great Britain or Ireland? Whatever may have been thought of the propriety of the measure, I never heard any doubt of the competency of parliament to consider and discuss it. Yet I defy any man to maintain the principle of those plans, without contending that, as a member of parliament, he possesses a right to concur in disfranchising those who sent him to parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. I am sure that no sufficient distinction, in point of principle, can be successfully maintained for a single moment; nor should I deem it necessary to dwell upon this point, in the manner I do, were I not convinced that it is connected in part with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of government which have lately become too prevalent in the world. It may, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rests on the supposition that there exists continually in every government a sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the people, ready to be called forth on every occasion, or rather, on every pretence, when it may suit the purposes of the party or faction who are the advocates of this doctrine to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It is in these false principles that are contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which in the present day have spread themselves over so large a proportion of the habitable globe.

“ These principles, Sir, are, at length, so well known and understood in their practical effects, that they can no longer hope for one enlightened or intelligent advocate, when they appear in their true colors. Yet, with all the horror we all feel, in common with the rest of the

world, at the effect of them, with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which we feel towards the constitution of our country, founded as it is, both in theory and experience, on principles directly the reverse, there are too many among us, who, while they abhor and reject such opinions, when presented to them in their naked deformity, suffer them in a more disguised shape to be gradually infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison is now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument, or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever be its particular form, can long subsist, if this principle is once admitted. In every government there must reside somewhere a supreme, absolute, and unlimited authority. This is equally true of every lawful monarchy—of every aristocracy—of every pure democracy (if indeed such a form of government ever has existed, or ever can exist)—and of those mixed constitutions formed and compounded from the others, which we are justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these governments, indeed alike, that power may by possibility be abused; but whether the abuse is such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or more properly speaking, of any portion of it, must always be an extreme case, and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility, not in law only, but in conscience and in duty, to all those who either act upon it themselves, or persuade others to do so. But no provision for such a case ever has been or can be made beforehand; it forms no chapter in any known code of laws, it can find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. But, above all, if such a principle can make no part of any established constitution, not even of those where the government is so framed as to be most liable to the abuse of its powers, it will be preposterous

indeed to suppose that it can be admitted in one where those powers are so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Shall that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best government, which cannot be admitted to exist as an established check even upon the worst? Pregnant as it is with danger and confusion, shall it be received and authorized in proportion as every reason, which can ever make it necessary to recur to it, is not likely to exist? Yet, Sir, I know not how it is, that, in proportion as we are less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy, in proportion as a government is so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means of preventing or correcting every abuse of power, and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due attention to the interests and feelings of every part of the community, in that very proportion persons have been found perverse enough to imagine, that such a constitution admits and recognises, as a part of it, that which is inconsistent with the nature of any government, and, above all, inapplicable to our own.

“ I have said more, Sir, upon this subject than I should have thought necessary, if I had not felt that this false and dangerous mockery of the *sovereignty of the people* is in truth one of the chief elements of Jacobinism, one of the favorite impostures to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who have not the opportunity of examining and exposing it, and that, as such, on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appears it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.

“ Sir, the next and not the least prevalent objection, is one which is contained in words which are an appeal to a natural and laudable, but what I must call an erroneous

and mistaken sense of national pride. It is an appeal to the generous and noble passions of a nation easily inflamed under any supposed attack upon its honor, I mean the attempt to represent the question of an union by compact between the parliaments of the two kingdoms as a question involving the independence of Ireland. It has been said, that no compensation could be made to any country for the surrender of its national independence. Sir, on this, as well as on every part of the question, I am desirous gentlemen should come closely to the point, that they should sift it to the bottom, and ascertain upon what grounds and principles their opinion really rests. Do they mean to maintain that in any humiliating, in any degrading sense of the word which can be acted upon practically as a rule, and which can lead to any useful conclusion, that at any time when the government of any two separate countries unite in forming one more extensive empire, the individuals who composed either of the former narrow societies are afterwards less members of an independent country, or to any valuable and useful purpose less possessed of political freedom or civil happiness, than they were before? It must be obvious to every gentleman who will look at the subject, in tracing the histories of all the countries, the most proud of their present existing independence, of all the nations in Europe, there is not one that could exist in the state in which it now stands, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to this hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one kingdom: but will any man in general assert, that in all the different unions which have formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants have become less free, that they have had less of which to be

proud, less scope for their own exertions, than they had in their former situation? If this doctrine is to be generally maintained, what becomes of the situation at this hour of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independent parliament of that kingdom?

“ If it be pushed to its full extent, it is obviously incompatible with all civil society. As the former principle of the sovereignty of the people strikes at the foundation of all governments, so this is equally hostile to all political confederacy, and mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

“ But while I combat this general and abstracted principle, which would operate as an objection to every union between separate states, on the ground of the sacrifice of independence, do I mean to contend that there is in no case just ground for such a sentiment? Far from it: it may become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people. If there exists a country which contains within itself the means of military protection, the naval force necessary for its defence, which furnishes objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to maintaining, with dignity, the rank which it has attained among the nations of the world; if, above all, it enjoys the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possesses a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any, it is within itself capable of correcting; and if that constitution be equal, if not superior, to that of any other in the world, or (which is nearly the same thing) if those who live under it believe it to be so, and fondly cherish that opinion, I can indeed well understand that such a country must be jealous of any measure, which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, is to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.

" But, Sir, if, on the other hand, it should happen that there be a country which, against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security, has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation ; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws, whose customs and habits are the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth ; the stability of whose government—the excellence of whose constitution, is more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very country of which we are speaking can only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance ;—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every rational principle of dignity, of honor, or of interest ? I would ask, whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances, which ought to dispose Ireland to an union ? Whether Great Britain is not precisely the nation, with which, on these principles, a country situated as Ireland is, would desire to unite ? Does an union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke ? Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble connection to render both invincible ?

" Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo
Nec nova regna peto ; paribus se legibus amba
Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant."

“ Sir, I have nearly stated all that is necessary for me to trouble the House with ; there are, however, one or two other objections which I wish not entirely to pass over ; one of them is, a general notion that an union with Great Britain must necessarily increase one of the great evils of Ireland, by producing depopulation in many parts of the country, and by increasing greatly the number of absentees. I do not mean to deny that this effect would, to a limited extent, take place during a part of the year ; but I think it will not be difficult for me to prove, that this circumstance will be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

“ If it be true that this measure has an inevitable tendency to admit the introduction of that British capital which is most likely to give life to all the operations of commerce, and to all the improvements of agriculture ; if it be that, which above all other considerations is most likely to give security, quiet, and internal repose to Ireland ; if it is likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and of civilization, by a more intimate intercourse with England ; if it is more likely to communicate from hence those habits which distinguish this country, and which, by a continued gradation, unite the highest and the lowest orders of the community without a chasm in any part of the system ; if it is not only likely to invite (as I have already said) English capital to set commerce in motion, but to offer it the use of new markets, to open fresh resources of wealth and industry, can wealth, can industry, can civilization increase among the whole bulk of the people without much more than counterbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of legislation ? If, notwithstanding the absence of parliament from Dublin, it would still remain the centre of education, and of the internal commerce of a country increasing in improvement ; if it would still re-

main the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation, will it be supposed, with a view even to the interests of those whose partial interests have been most successfully appealed to ; with a view either to the respectable body of the bar, to the merchant, or to the shop-keeper, of Dublin (if it were possible to suppose that a transaction of this sort ought to be referred to that single criterion) that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general advantage of the state ? Let it be remembered also, that if the transfer of the seat of legislature may call from Ireland to England the members of the united parliament, yet, after the union, property, influence, and consideration in Ireland will lead, as much as in Great Britain, to all the objects of Imperial ambition ; and there must, consequently, exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that country, and to those who possess it, to reside there, and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they live, and to extend and improve their influence and connections.

“ But, Sir, I need not dwell longer on argument, however it may satisfy my own mind, because we can, on this question, refer to experience. I see every gentleman anticipates that I allude to Scotland. What has been the result of the union there ? An union, give me leave to say, as much opposed, and by much the same arguments, prejudices, and misconceptions, as are urged at this moment ; creating too the same alarms, and provoking the same outrages, as have lately taken place in Dublin. Look at the metropolis of Scotland ; the population of Edinburgh has been more than doubled since the union, and a new city added to the old. But we may be told, that Edinburgh has engrossed all the commerce of that country, and has those advantages which Dublin cannot expect. Yet while Edinburgh, deprived of its

parliament, but retaining, as Dublin would retain, its courts of justice; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the seat of national education, while Edinburgh has baffled all the predictions of that period, what has been the situation of Glasgow? The population of Glasgow, since the union, has increased in the proportion of between five and six to one; look at its progress in manufactures; look at its general advantages, and tell me what ground there is, judging by experience in aid of theory, for those gloomy apprehensions which have been so industriously excited.

“ There remains, Sir, another general line of argument, which I have already anticipated, and I hope answered, that the commercial privileges now enjoyed by Ireland, and to which it owes so much of its prosperity, would be less secure than at present. I have given an answer to that already, by stating, that they are falsely imputed to the independence of the Irish parliament, for that they are, in fact, owing to the exercise of the voluntary discretion of the British parliament, unbound by compact, prompted only by its natural disposition to consider the interests of Ireland the same as its own; and if that has been done while Ireland is only united to us in the imperfect and precarious manner in which it is, while it has a separate parliament, notwithstanding the commercial jealousies of our own manufacturers; if under these circumstances we have done so, if we have done so with no other connection than that which now subsists, and while Ireland has no share in our representation, what fresh ground can there be for apprehension, when she will have her proportionate weight in the legislature, and will be united with us as closely as Lancashire or Yorkshire, or any other county in Great Britain?

“ Sir, I have seen it under the same authority to which I am sorry so often to advert, that the linen trade would be injured, and that there will be no security for its re-

taining its present advantages. I have already stated to you (and with that very authority in my favor) that those advantages are at present precarious, and that their security can only arise from compact with Great Britain. Such a compact this measure would establish in the most solemn manner; but besides this, Sir, the natural policy of this country, not merely its experienced liberality, but the identity of interests after an union, would offer a security worth a thousand compacts.

“ Sir, the only other general topic of objection is that upon which great pains have been taken to raise an alarm in Ireland—the idea that the main principle of the measure was to subject Ireland to a load of debt and an increase of taxes, and to expose her to the consequences of all our alleged difficulties and supposed necessities.

“ Sir, I hope the zeal, the spirit, and the liberal and enlarged policy of this country, has given ample proof that it is not from a pecuniary motive that we seek an union. If it is not desirable on the grounds I have stated, it cannot be recommended for the purpose of taxation; but to quiet any jealousy on this subject, here again let us look to Scotland: Is there any instance where, with 45 members on her part, and 513 on ours, that part of the united kingdom has paid more than its proportion to the general burdens? Is it then, Sir, any ground of apprehension that we are likely to tax Ireland more heavily when she becomes associated with ourselves? To tax in its due proportion the whole of the empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, is the great characteristic of British finance, as equality of laws is of the British constitution.

“ But, Sir, in addition to this, if we come to the details of this proposition, it is in our power to fix, for any number of years which shall be thought fit, the proportion by which the contribution of Ireland to the expenses

of the state shall be regulated; that these proportions shall not be such as would make a contribution greater than the necessary amount of its own present necessary expenses as a separate kingdom; and even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution from time to time might be made to depend upon the comparative produce, in each kingdom, of such general taxes as might be thought to afford the best criterion of their respective wealth. Or, what I should hope would be found practicable, the system of internal taxation in each country might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure that Ireland shall never be taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves.

“The application of these principles, however, will form matter of future discussion. I mention them only as strongly shewing, from the misrepresentation which has taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it is upon the House to receive these propositions, and to adopt, after due deliberation, such resolutions as may record to Ireland the terms upon which we are ready to meet her; and, in the mean time, let us wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment, when the effect of reason and discussion may reconcile the minds of men in that kingdom to a measure which I am sure will be found as necessary for their peace and happiness, as it will be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British empire.

“Sir, it remains only for me to lay these resolutions before the House, wishing that the more detailed discussion of them may be reserved to a future day.

Resolved—“First, that in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such

measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective parliaments of His Majesty's said kingdoms.

Second—"That it appears to this Committee that it would be fit to propose as the first article, to serve as a basis of the said union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a day to be agreed upon, be united in one kingdom, by the name of the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*.

Third—"That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that the succession to the monarchy and the imperial crown of the said united kingdoms shall continue limited and settled in the same manner as the imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the union between England and Scotland.

Fourth—"That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same parliament, to be stiled the parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that such a number of Lords spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members of the House of Commons as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of the parliament of Ireland previous to the said union: and that every member hereafter to sit and vote in the said parliament of the United Kingdom shall, until the said parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same oaths, and make the same declaration, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made by the

members of the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

Fifth,—“ That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that His Majesty’s subjects in Ireland shall, at all times hereafter, be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by His Majesty, his heirs, or successors, with any foreign power, as His Majesty’s subjects in Great Britain; that no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed, as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect; and that all other matters of trade and commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the united parliament,

“ Sixth,—That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose that the charge arising from the payment of the interest or sinking fund for the reduction of the principal of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively.

“ That for a number of years to be limited, the future ordinary expenses of the United Kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the union; and that after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportions shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the union.

“ Seventh,—That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose that all laws in force at the time of the union, and that all the courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms, shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the parliament of the United Kingdom to require :

“ That the foregoing resolutions be laid before His Majesty with an humble address, assuring His Majesty that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in His Majesty’s gracious message :

“ That we entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and entire union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce, of the respective kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all

times an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources of the empire.

“ Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before His Majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to His Majesty’s wisdom, at such time and in such manner as His Majesty, in his parental solicitude for the happiness of his people, shall judge fit, to communicate these propositions to his parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established, by the deliberate consent of the parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests of His Majesty’s faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in support of the honor and dignity of His Majesty’s crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire.”

The question was carried for the Speaker’s leaving the chair,

Ayes 140

Noes 15,

and the House then went into a committee upon the resolutions.

After some farther delays, Mr. PITT finally accomplished his point ; but he was severely censured for some of the means by which it was brought about, particularly the promise of complete emancipation made to the Roman Catholics, to induce them to support the union. It does

not appear that Mr. PITT had any authority to send lord CORNWALLIS instructions to make such a promise. He found it would not be sanctioned in the Cabinet, where he also experienced, at the close of the year 1800, a determined opposition to his dictates on some other points, which he had equally at heart. But as the catholic question was of a popular nature, and therefore better fitted to conceal the mortifications of his pride, he made it the apology for his resignation.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



